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SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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IN SIX VOLUMES.

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SERMON XX.

The First DISCOURSE upon our LORD'S Sermon on the Mount.

MATTHEW V. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,
Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

1. OUR Lord had now * "gone about all Galilee," beginning at the time † "when John was cast into prison," not only "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom," but likewise "healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people." It was a natural consequence of

* Matt. iv. 23. † Ver. 12.

this, that * "there followed him great multitudes from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from the region beyond Jordan. † "And seeing the multitudes," whom no synagogue could contain, even had there been any at hand, "he went up into a mountain," where there was room for all, that came unto him from every quarter. "And when he was set," as the manner of the Jews was, "his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth" (an expression denoting the beginning of a solemn discourse) "and taught them, saying."—

2. Let us observe, who it is, that is here speaking, that we may *take heed how* we *hear*. It is the Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of all, who as such, has a right to dispose of all his creatures; the Lord our Governor, whose kingdom is from everlasting, and ruleth over all; the great Lawgiver, who can well enforce all his laws, being "able to save and to destroy;" yea, to punish with everlasting destruction from his presence and from the glory of his power. It is the eternal Wisdom of the Father, who knoweth whereof we are made, and understands our inmost frame; who knows how we stand related to God, to one another, to every creature which God hath made; and consequently how to adapt every law he prescribes, to all the circumstances wherein he hath placed us. It is he who is "loving unto every man, whose mercy is over all his works:" the God of love, who having emptied himself of his eternal glory, is come forth from his Father, to declare his will to the children of men, and then goeth again to the Father: who is sent of God

* Matt. iv. 25. † Matt. v. 1, &c.

God "to open the eyes of the blind, to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs:" it is the great Prophet of the Lord, concerning whom God had ſolemnly declared long ago, * "Whoſoever will not hearken unto my words, which he ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him." Or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, † "Every ſoul which ſhall not hear that Prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people."

3. And what is it which he is teaching? The Son of God, who came from heaven, is here ſhewing us the way to heaven, tō the place which he hath prepared for us, the glory he had before the world began. He is teaching us the true way to life everlaſting, the royal way which leads to the kingdom. And the only true way; for there is none beſides: all other paths lead to deſtruction. From the character of the Speaker we are well aſſured, that he hath declared the full and perfect will of God. He hath uttered not one tittle too much; nothing more than he had received of the Father. Nor too little; he hath not ſhunned to declare the whole counſel of God. Much leſs hath he uttered any thing wrong, any thing contrary to the will of him that ſent him. All his words are true and right, concerning all things, and ſhall ſtand faſt for ever and ever.

And we may eaſily remark, That in explaining and confirming theſe faithful and true ſayings, he takes care to refute not only the miſtakes of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, which then were, the falſe comments whereby the Jewiſh Teachers of that age had perverted the word of God; but all the practical miſtakes, that are inconſiſtent with ſalvation, which ſhould ever ariſe in the Chriſtian

* Deut. xviii. 19. † Acts iii. 23.

tian Church: all the comments whereby the Christian Teachers (so called) of any age or nation, should pervert the word of God, and teach unwary souls, to seek death in the error of their life.

4. And hence we are naturally led to observe, whom it is that he is here teaching? Not the Apostles alone; if so, he had no need to have gone *up into the mountain*. A room in the house of *Matthew*, or any of his disciples, would have contained the twelve. Nor does it in any wise appear that the disciples who *came unto him* were the twelve only. Οἱ μαθηταὶ, ἀυτε, without any force put upon the expression, may be understood, of all who desired to *learn of him*. But to put this out of all question, to make it undeniably plain that where it is said, *He opened his mouth and taught them*, the word *them* includes all the multitudes, who went up with him into the mountain, we need not only observe the concluding verses of the seventh chapter. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the multitudes*, οἱ ὄχλοι, *were astonished at his doctrine* (or teaching.) *For he taught* them (the multitudes) *as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.*

Nor was it only those multitudes who were with him on the mount, to whom he now taught the way of salvation: but all the children of men, the whole race of mankind, the children that were yet unborn; all the generations to come even to the end of the world, who should ever hear the words of this life.

5. And this all men allow, with regard to some parts of the ensuing discourse. No man, for instance, denies, that what is said *of poverty of spirit*,

ſpirit, relates to all mankind. But many have ſuppoſed, that other parts concerned only the Apoſtles, or the firſt Chriſtians, or the Miniſters of Chriſt: and were never deſigned for the generality of men, who conſequently, have nothing at all to do with them.

But may we not juſtly enquire, who told them this? That ſome parts of this diſcourſe, concerned only the Apoſtles? Or the Chriſtians of the Apoſtolic age? Or the Miniſters of Chriſt? Bare aſſertions are not a ſufficient proof, to eſtabliſh a point of ſo great importance. Has then our Lord himſelf taught us, that ſome parts of his diſcourſe, do not concern all mankind? Without doubt, had it been ſo, he would have told us; he could not have omitted ſo neceſſary an information. But has he told us ſo? Where? In the diſcourſe itſelf? No: here is not the leaſt intimation of it. Has he ſaid ſo elſewhere? In any other of his diſcourſes? Not one word ſo much as glancing this way, can we find in any thing he ever ſpoke, either to the multitudes or to his diſciples. Has any of the Apoſtles, or other inſpired Writers, left ſuch an inſtruction upon record? No ſuch thing. No aſſertion of this kind is to be found in all the Oracles of God. Who then are the men who are ſo much wiſer than God? Wiſe, ſo far above that is written?

6. Perhaps they will ſay, "That the reaſon of the thing requires ſuch a reſtriction to be made." If it does, it muſt be on one of theſe two accounts; becauſe without ſuch a reſtriction, the diſcourſe would either be apparently abſurd, or would contradict ſome other Scripture. But this is not the caſe. It will plainly appear, when we

come to examine the ſeveral particulars, that there is no abſurdity at all in applying all which our Lord hath here delivered, to all mankind. Neither will it infer any contradiction to any thing elſe he has delivered, nor to any other Scripture whatever. Nay, it will farther appear, that either all the parts of this diſcourſe are to be applied to men in general; or no part; ſeeing they are all connected together, all joined as the ſtones in an arch, of which you cannot take one away, without deſtroying the whole fabric.

7. We may, laſtly, obſerve, How our Lord teaches here. And ſurely, as at all times, ſo particularly at this he ſpeaks, *as never man ſpake.* Not as the holy men of old; although they alſo ſpoke *as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* Not as *Peter* or *James*, or *John*, or *Paul.* They were indeed wiſe maſter-builders in his Church. But ſtill in this, in the degrees of heavenly wiſdom, the ſervant is not as his Lord. No, nor even as himſelf, at any other time, or on any other occaſion. It does not appear, that it was ever his deſign, at any other time or place, to lay down at once the whole plan of his Religion, to give us a full proſpect of Chriſtianity, to deſcribe at large the nature of that holineſs without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Particular branches of this he has indeed deſcribed, on a thouſand different occaſions. But never beſides here, did he give, of ſet purpoſe, a general view of the whole. Nay, we have nothing elſe of this kind in all the Bible: unleſs one ſhould except that ſhort ſketch of Holineſs, delivered by God in thoſe ten words or commandments, to *Moſes*, on *Mount Sinai.* But even here how wide a difference is there between one and the other? "Even that

that which was made glorious had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth," 2 Cor. iii. 10.

8. Above all, with what amazing love does the Son of God, here reveal his Father's will to man! He does not bring us again "to the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs and darkneſs and tempeſt." He does not ſpeak as when he "thundered out of heaven; when the Higheſt gave his thunder, hail-ſtones and coals of fire." He now addreſſes us with his ſtill, ſmall voice, *Bleſſed* or happy *are the poor in ſpirit*. Happy are the mourners; the meek; thoſe that hunger after righteouſneſs; the merciful; the pure in heart; happy in the end and in the way; happy in this life, and in life everlaſting! As if he had ſaid, Who is he that deſireth to live, and would fain ſee good days? Behold, I ſhew you the thing which your ſoul longeth for; ſee the way you have ſo long ſought in vain! The way of pleaſantneſs; the path to calm, joyous peace, to heaven below and heaven above!

9. At the ſame time with what authority does he teach! Well might they ſay, *Not as the ſcribes*. Obſerve the manner, (but it cannot be expreſſed in words) the air, with which he ſpeaks! Not as *Moſes*, the ſervant of God: not as *Abraham* his friend: not as any of the Prophets; nor as any of the ſons of men. It is ſomething more than human; more than can agree to any created being. It ſpeaks the Creator of all, a God, a God appears! Yea, the Being of beings, JEHOVAH, the Self-exiſtent, the Supreme, the God who is over all, bleſſed for ever!

10. This divine diſcourſe, delivered in the moſt excellent method, every ſubſequent part illuſtrating

ing thofe that precede, is commonly, and not improperly divided, into three principal branches: the firſt, contained in the fifth, the ſecond in the ſixth, and the third in the ſeventh chapter. In the firſt, the ſum of all true Religion is laid down in eight particulars, which are explained and guarded againſt the falſe gloſſes of man, in the following parts of the fifth chapter. In the ſecond are rules for that right intention, which we are to preſerve in all our outward actions; unmixt with worldly deſires, or anxious cares for even the neceſſaries of life. In the third, are cautions againſt the main hinderances of religion, cloſed with an application of the whole.

I. 1. Our Lord, firſt, lays down the ſum of all true Religion in eight particulars, which he explains, and guards againſt the falſe gloſſes of men to the end of the fifth chapter.

Some have ſuppoſed that he deſigned in theſe, to point out the ſeveral ſtages of the Chriſtian courſe; the ſteps which a Chriſtian ſucceſſively takes in his journey to the promiſed land: others, that all the particulars here ſet down, belong at all times to every Chriſtian: and why may we not allow both the one and the other? What inconſiſtency is there between them? It is undoubtedly true, that both *poverty of ſpirit* and every other temper which is here mentioned, are at all times found, in a greater or leſs degree, in every real Chriſtian. And it is equally true, that real Chriſtianity always begins in poverty of ſpirit, and goes on in the order here ſet down, till the *man of God* is made *perfect*. We begin at the loweſt of theſe gifts of God; yet ſo as not to relinquiſh this, when we are called of God, to

come

come up higher: but "whereunto we have already attained, we hold fast," while we *preſs on* to what is yet *before*, to the higheſt bleſſings of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

2. The foundation of all is *poverty of ſpirit:* here therefore our Lord begins: "Bleſſed, ſaith he, are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

It may not improbably be ſuppoſed, that our Lord, looking on thoſe who were round about him, and obſerving that not many rich were there, but rather the poor of the world, took occaſion from thence, to make a tranſition from temporal to ſpiritual things. *Bleſſed*, ſaith he (or *happy:* ſo the word ſhould be rendered, both in this and the following verſes) *are the poor in ſpirit.* He does not ſay, they that are *poor*, as to *outward circumſtances;* it being not impoſſible, that ſome of theſe may be as far from happineſs as a monarch upon his throne; but *the poor in ſpirit*, they who, whatever their outward circumſtances are, have that diſpoſition of heart, which is the firſt ſtep to all real, ſubſtantial happineſs, either in this world or that which is to come.

3. Some have judged, That by the *poor in ſpirit* here, are meant, thoſe who love poverty; thoſe who are free from covetouſneſs; from the love of money; who fear, rather than deſire riches. Perhaps they have been induced ſo to judge, by wholly confining their thoughts to the very term; or by conſidering the weighty obſervation of St. Paul, "That the love of money is the root of all evil." And hence many have wholly diveſted themſelves, not only of riches, but of all worldly goods. Hence alſo the vows of voluntary poverty, ſeem to have ariſen in the Romiſh

Romiſh Church: it being ſuppoſed, that ſo eminent a degree of this fundamental grace, muſt be a large ſtep toward *the kingdom of heaven*.

But theſe do not ſeem to have obſerved, firſt, That the expreſſion of St. Paul muſt be underſtood with ſome reſtriction. Otherwiſe it is not true; for the love of money is not *the root*, the ſole root *of all evil*. There are a thouſand other roots of evil in this world, as ſad experience daily ſhews. His meaning can only be, it is the root of very many evils; perhaps of more than any ſingle vice beſides; ſecondly, That this ſenſe of the expreſſion *poor in ſpirit*, will by no means ſuit our Lord's preſent deſign, which is to lay a general foundation whereon the whole fabric of Chriſtianity may be built: a deſign which would in no wiſe be anſwered, by guarding againſt one particular vice: ſo that, if even this were ſuppoſed to be one part of his meaning, it could not poſſibly be the whole: thirdly, that it cannot be ſuppoſed to be any part of his meaning, unleſs we charge him with manifeſt tautology: ſeeing if *poverty of ſpirit* were only freedom from covetouſneſs, from the love of money, or the deſire of riches, it would coincide with what he afterwards mentions, it would be only a branch of *purity of heart*.

4. Who then are "the poor in ſpirit?" Without queſtion, the humble; they who know themſelves: who are convinced of ſin: thoſe to whom God hath given that firſt repentance, which is previous to faith in Chriſt.

One of theſe can no longer ſay, "I am rich and increaſed in goods and have need of nothing:" as now knowing, that he is "wretched and poor and miſerable and blind and naked." He

He is convinced that he is ſpiritually poor indeed; having no ſpiritual good abiding in him. *In me*, ſaith he, *dwelleth no good thing*; but whatſoever is evil and abominable. He has a deep ſenſe of the loathſome leproſy of ſin, which he brought with him from his mother's womb, which overſpreads his whole ſoul, and totally corrupts every power and faculty thereof. He ſees more and more of the evil tempers, which ſpring from that evil root: the pride and haughtineſs of ſpirit, the conſtant bias to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think: the vanity, the thirſt after the eſteem or honour that cometh from men: the hatred or envy, the jealouſy or revenge, the anger, malice, or bitterneſs; the inbred enmity both againſt God and man, which appears in ten thouſand ſhapes: the love of the world, the ſelf will, and the fooliſh and hurtful deſires, which cleave to his inmoſt ſoul. He is conſcious, how deeply he has offended by his tongue; if not by profane, immodeſt, untrue or unkind words, yet by diſcourſe which was not *good, to the uſe of edifying*, nor *meet to miniſter grace to the hearers*: which conſequently was all *corrupt* in God's account, and grievous to his holy Spirit. His evil works are now likewiſe ever in his ſight; if he tells them, "they are more than he is able to expreſs." He may as well think to number the "drops of rain, the ſands of the ſea, or the days of eternity."

5. His guilt is now alſo before his face: he knows the puniſhment he has deſerved, were it only on account of his *carnal mind*, the entire, univerſal corruption of his nature: how much more, on account of all his evil deſires and thoughts

thoughts, of all his sinful words and actions? He cannot doubt for a moment, but the least of these deserves the damnation of hell; "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched." Above all, the guilt of "not believing on the name of the only begotten Son of God," lies heavy upon him. *How*, saith he, *shall* I escape, who "neglect so great salvation! He that believeth not, is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him."

6. But what shall he give in exchange for his soul, which is forfeited to the just vengeance of God? "Wherewithal shall he come before the Lord?" How shall he pay him that he oweth? Were he from this moment to perform the most perfect obedience to every command of God, this would make no amends for a single sin, for any one act of past disobedience: seeing he owes God all the service he is able to perform from this moment to all eternity; could he pay this, it would make no manner of amends, for what he ought to have done before. He sees himself therefore utterly helpless, with regard to atoning for his past sins: utterly unable to make any amends to God, to pay any ransom for his own soul.

But if God would forgive him all that is past, on this one condition, that he should sin no more, that for the time to come he should entirely and constantly obey all his commands: he well knows that this would profit him nothing, being a condition he could never perform. He knows and feels, that he is not able to obey, even the outward commands of God: seeing these cannot be obeyed, while his heart remains in its natural sinfulness and corruption: inasmuch as an evil tree, cannot bring forth good fruit. But he cannot

cleanse

cleanſe a ſinful heart: with men this is impoſſible. So that he is utterly at a loſs, even how to begin walking in the path of God's commandments. He knows not how to get one ſtep forward in the way. Encompaſſed with ſin and ſorrow and fear, and finding no way to eſcape, he can only cry out, "Lord ſave, or I periſh!"

7. *Poverty of ſpirit* then, as it implies the firſt ſtep we take in running the race which is ſet before us, is, a juſt ſenſe of our inward and outward ſins, and of our guilt and helpleſſneſs. This ſome have monſtrouſly ſtiled, "The virtue of humility;" thus teaching us to be proud of knowing we deſerve damnation. But our Lord's expreſſion is quite of another kind; conveying no idea to the hearer, but that of mere want, of naked ſin, of helpleſs guilt and miſery.

8. The great Apoſtle, where he endeavours to bring ſinners to God, ſpeaks in a manner juſt anſwerable to this. * "The wrath of God," ſaith he, "is revealed from heaven, againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men:" a charge which he immediately fixes on the Heathen world, and thereby proves they were under the wrath of God. He next ſhews, that the Jews were no better than they, and were therefore under the ſame condemnation: and all this not in order to their attaining "The noble virtue of humility," but "that every mouth might be ſtopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

He proceeds to ſhew, that they were helpleſs as well as guilty; which is the plain purport of all thoſe expreſſions, "Therefore by the deeds

* Rom. i. 18, &c.

of the law, there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified—But now the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith, of Jeſus Chriſt, without the law is manifeſted—We conclude, That a man is juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the law:" expreſſions all tending to the ſame point, even to *hide pride from man:* to humble him to the duſt, without teaching him to reflect upon his humility as a virtue; to inſpire him with that full piercing conviction of his utter ſinfulneſs, guilt and helpleſſneſs, which caſts the ſinner, ſtript of all, loſt and undone, on his ſtrong helper, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.

9. One cannot but obſerve here, that Chriſtianity begins, juſt where Heathen morality ends: "poverty of ſpirit, conviction of ſin, the renouncing ourſelves, the not having our own righteouſneſs," the very firſt point in the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, leaving all Pagan religion behind. This was ever hid from the wiſe men of this world: inſomuch that the whole Roman language, even with all the improvements of the Auguſtan age, does not afford ſo much as a name for *humility*; (the word from whence we borrow this, as is well known, bearing in Latin a quite different meaning:) no, nor was one found in all the copious language of Greece, till it was *made* by the great Apoſtle.

10. O that we may feel what they were not able to expreſs! Sinner, awake! Know thyſelf! Know and feel, that thou wert *ſhapen in wickedneſs, and that in ſin did thy mother conceive* thee, and that thou thyſelf haſt been heaping ſin upon ſin, ever ſince thou couldſt diſcern good from evil. Sink under the mighty hand of God, as guilty of death eternal: and caſt off, renounce, abhor

abhor all imagination of ever being able to help thyſelf! Be it all thy hope to be waſhed in his blood, and renewed by his almighty Spirit, "who himſelf bore all our ſins in his own body on the tree." So ſhalt thou witneſs, "Happy are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

11. This is that *kingdom of heaven, or of God*, which *is within* us, even "righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt." And what is righteouſneſs, but the life of God in the ſoul: the mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus: the image of God ſtampt upon the heart, now renewed after the likeneſs of him that created it? What is it but the love of God, becauſe he firſt loved us, and the love of all mankind, for his ſake?

And what is this peace, the peace of God, but that calm ſerenity of ſoul, that ſweet repoſe in the blood of Jeſus, which leaves no doubt of our acceptance in him? Which excludes all fear, but the loving, filial fear of offending our Father which is in heaven.

This inward kingdom implies alſo *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, who ſeals upon our hearts, *the redemption which is in Jeſus*, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, imputed to us, "for the remiſſion of the ſins that are paſt:" who giveth us now the *earneſt of our inheritance* of the crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give at that day. And well may this be termed, "The kingdom of heaven;" ſeeing it is heaven already opened in the ſoul; the firſt ſpringing up of thoſe rivers of pleaſure, which flow at God's right hand for evermore.

12. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Whoſoever thou art, to whom God hath given

to be *poor in ſpirit*, to feel thyſelf loſt, thou haſt a right thereto, through the gracious promiſe of him who cannot lie. It is purchaſed for thee by the blood of the Lamb. It is very nigh: thou art on the brink of heaven. Another ſtep, and thou entereſt into the kingdom of righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy. Art thou all ſin? "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world?" All unholy? See thy "Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous." Art thou unable to atone for the leaſt of thy ſins? *He is the propitiation for* all thy *ſins*. Now believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and all thy ſins ſhall be blotted out. Art thou totally unclean in ſoul and body? Here is the *fountain for ſin and uncleanneſs*. "Ariſe and waſh away thy ſins:" ſtagger no more at the promiſe through unbelief. Give glory to God: dare to believe! Now cry out from the ground of thy heart,

Yes, I yield, I yield at laſt,
Liſten to thy ſpeaking blood;
Me with all my ſins I caſt
On my atoning God!

13. Then thou learneſt of him to be *lowly of heart*. And this is the true, genuine, Chriſtian humility, which flows from a ſenſe of the love of God, reconciled to us in Chriſt Jeſus. *Poverty of ſpirit*, in this meaning of the word, begins where a ſenſe of guilt and of the wrath of God ends; and is, a continual ſenſe of our total dependance on him, for every good thought or word or work; of our utter inability to all good, unleſs he *water us every moment*: and an abhorrence of the praiſe of men, knowing that all praiſe is due unto God only. With this is joined

joined a loving ſhame, a tender humiliation before God, even for the ſins which we know he hath forgiven us, and for the ſin which ſtill remaineth in our hearts, although we know it is not imputed to our condemnation. Nevertheleſs the conviction we feel of inbred ſin, is deeper and deeper every day. The more we grow in grace, the more do we ſee, of the deſperate wickedneſs of our heart. The more we advance in the knowledge and love of God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (as great a myſtery as this may appear, to thoſe who know not the power of God unto ſalvation) the more do we diſcern of our alienation from God; of the enmity that is in our carnal mind, and the neceſſity of our being entirely renewed in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

II. 1. It is true, he has ſcarce any conception of this, who now begins to know the inward kingdom of heaven. "In his proſperity he ſaith, I ſhall never be moved; thou, Lord haſt made my hill ſo ſtrong." Sin is utterly bruiſed beneath his feet, that he can ſcarce believe it remaineth in him. Even temptation is ſilenced and ſpeaks not again: it cannot approach, but ſtands afar off. He is borne aloft in the chariots of joy and love: he ſoars *as upon the wings of an eagle*. But our Lord well knew, that this triumphant ſtate does not often continue long. He therefore preſently ſubjoins, "Bleſſed are they that mourn; for they ſhall be comforted."

2. Not that we can imagine this promiſe belongs to thoſe who mourn only on ſome worldly account: who are in ſorrow and heavineſs, merely on account of ſome worldly trouble or

disappointment: such as the loss of their reputation, or friends; or the impairing of their fortune. As little title to it have they who are afflicting themselves, through fear of some temporal evil: or who pine away with anxious care, or that desire of earthly things which *maketh the heart sick*. Let us not think, these *shall receive any thing from the Lord:* he is not in all their thoughts. Therefore it is that they thus "walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain." "And this shall ye have of mine hand, saith the Lord, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

3. The mourners of whom our Lord here speaks, are those that mourn on quite another account: they that mourn after God, after him in whom they did *rejoice with joy unspeakable*, when he gave them to *taste the good*, the pardoning "word, and the powers of the world to come." But he now *hides his face and they are troubled;* they cannot see him through the dark cloud. But they see temptation and sin, which they fondly supposed were gone never to return, arising again, following after them amain, and holding them in on every side. It is not strange if their soul is now disquieted within them, and trouble and heaviness take hold upon them. Nor will their great enemy fail to improve the occasion; to ask, "Where is now thy God? Where is now the blessedness whereof thou speakest? The beginning of the kingdom of heaven? Yea, hath God said, Thy sins are forgiven thee? Surely God hath not said it. It was only a dream, a mere delusion, a creature of thy own imagination. If thy sins are forgiven why art thou thus? Can a pardoned sinner be thus unholy?"—And if then, instead of immediately *crying* to God they

they reaſon with him that is wiſer than they, they will be in heavineſs indeed, in ſorrow of heart, in anguiſh not to be expreſt. Nay even when God ſhines again upon the ſoul, and takes away all doubt of his paſt mercy, ſtill he that is *weak in faith* may be tempted and troubled, on account of what is to come: eſpecially, when inward ſin revives, and thruſts ſore at him that he may fall. Then may he again cry out,

" I have a ſin of fear, that when I've ſpun
My laſt thread, I ſhall periſh on the ſhore!"

leſt I ſhould make ſhipwreck of the faith, and my laſt eſtate be worſe than the firſt:

" Leſt all my bread of life ſhould fail,
And I ſink down unchang'd to hell."

4. Sure it is that this affliction " for the preſent is not joyous but grievous. Nevertheleſs, afterward it bringeth forth peaceable fruit unto them that are exerciſed thereby." *Bleſſed* therefore *are they that* thus *mourn*, if they *tarry the Lord's leiſure*, and ſuffer not themſelves to be turned out of the way, by the miſerable comforters of the world; if they reſolutely reject all the comforts of ſin, of folly and vanity; all the idle diverſions and amuſements of the world, all the pleaſures which *periſh in the uſing*, and which only tend to benumb and ſtupify the ſoul, that it may neither be ſenſible of itſelf nor God. Bleſſed are they who *follow on to know the Lord*, and ſteadily refuſe all other comfort. They ſhall be comforted by the conſolations of his Spirit, by a freſh manifeſtation of his love; by ſuch a witneſs of his accepting them in the Beloved, as ſhall never more be taken away from them. This *full aſſurance*

assurance of faith swallows up all doubt, as well as all tormenting fear; God now giving them a sure hope of an enduring substance and *strong consolation through grace*. Without disputing, whether it be possible for any of those to *fall away, who were once enlightened and made partakers of the Holy Ghost*, it suffices them to say, by the power now resting upon them. * "Who shall separate them from the love of Christ? I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height nor depth--shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

5. This whole process, both of mourning for an absent God, and recovering the joy of his countenance, seems to be shadowed out in what our Lord spoke to his Apostles, the night before his passion. † "Do ye enquire of that I said, a little while and ye shall not see me, and again, a little while and ye shall see me? Verily, verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament," namely when ye do not see me; "but the world shall rejoice," shall triumph over you, as though your hope were now come to an end. "And ye shall be sorrowful," through doubt, through fear, through temptation, through vehement desire: "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy," by the return of him whom your soul loveth. "A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come. But as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now have sorrow:" ye mourn

* Rom. viii. 35—38, 39. † John xvi. 19—22.

mourn and cannot be comforted. "But I will see you again: and your heart shall rejoice, [with calm, inward joy,] and your joy no man taketh from you."

6. But although this mourning is at an end, is lost in holy joy, by the return of the Comforter, yet is there another, and a blessed mourning it is, which abides in the children of God. They still mourn for the sins and miseries of mankind: they *weep with them that weep*. They weep for them that weep not for themselves, for the sinners against their own souls. They mourn for the weakness and unfaithfulness of those, that are in some measure saved from their sins. "Who is weak and they are not weak? Who is offended and they burn not?" They are grieved for the dishonour continually done to the Majesty of heaven and earth. At all times they have an awful sense of this, which brings a deep seriousness upon their spirits: a seriousness which is not a little increased, since the eyes of their understanding were opened, by their continually seeing the vast ocean of eternity, without a bottom or a shore, which has already swallowed up millions of millions of men, and is gaping to devour them that yet remain. They see here, the house of God eternal in the heavens; there, hell and destruction without a covering; and thence feel the importance of every moment, which just appears, and is gone for ever.

7. But all this wisdom of God is foolishness with the world. The whole affair of *mourning* and *poverty of spirit*, is with them stupidity and dulness. Nay it is well if they pass so favourable a judgment upon it; if they do not vote it to be mere moping and melancholy, if not downright

right lunacy and diſtraction. And it is no wonder at all, that this judgment ſhould be paſſed, by thoſe who know not God. Suppoſe as two perſons were walking together, one ſhould ſuddenly ſtop, and with the ſtrongeſt ſigns of fear and amazement, cry out, "On what a precipice do we ſtand! See, we are on the point of being daſhed in pieces! Another ſtep, and we fall into that huge abyſs. Stop, I will not go on for all the world." When the other, who ſeemed to himſelf at leaſt equally ſharpſighted, looked forward and ſaw nothing of all this; what would he think of his companion? But that he was *beſide himſelf*; that his head was out of order: that much religion (if he was not guilty of much learning) had certainly *made him mad*.

8. But let not the children of God, *the mourners in Sion*, be moved by any of theſe things. Ye whoſe eyes are enlightened, be not troubled by thoſe, who walk on ſtill in darkneſs. Ye do not walk on in a vain ſhadow: God and eternity are real things. Heaven and hell are in very deed open before you: and ye are on the edge of the great gulph. It has already ſwallowed up more than words can expreſs, nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, and ſtill yawns to devour, whether they ſee it or no, the giddy, miſerable children of men. O cry aloud! Spare not! Lift up your voice, to him who graſps both time and eternity, both for yourſelves and your brethren, that ye may be counted worthy to eſcape the deſtruction that cometh as a whirlwind! That ye may be brought ſafe through all the waves and ſtorms, into the haven where you would be. Weep for yourſelves, till he wipes away the tears from your

your eyes. And even then weep for the miſeries that come upon the earth, till the Lord of all ſhall put a period to miſery and ſin, ſhall wipe away the tears from all faces, and "the knowledge of the Lord ſhall cover the earth, as the waters cover the ſea."

SERMON

SERMON XXI.

DISCOURSE the SECOND, on our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW V. 5, 6, 7.

Bleſſed are the meek; for they ſhall inherit the earth.

Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled.

Bleſſed are the merciful; for they ſhall obtain mercy.

1. WHEN "the winter is paſt, when the time of ſinging is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land;" when he that comforts the mourners is now returned, *that he may abide with them for ever:* when at the brightneſs of his preſence the clouds diſperſe, the dark clouds of doubt and uncertainty, the ſtorms of fear flee away, the waves of ſorrow ſubſide, and their ſpirit again *rejoiceth in God* their *Saviour:* then is it that this word is eminently

nently fulfilled, then thoſe whom he hath comforted can bear witneſs, *Bleſſed*, or happy, *are the meek; for they ſhall inherit the earth.*

2. But who are the meek? Not thoſe who grieve at nothing, becauſe they know nothing; who are not diſcompoſed at the evils that occur, becauſe they diſcern not evil from good. Not thoſe who are ſheltered from the ſhocks of life, by a ſtupid inſenſibility; who have, either by nature or art, the virtue of ſtocks and ſtones, and reſent nothing, becauſe they feel nothing. Brute philoſophers are wholly unconcerned in this matter. Apathy is as far from meekneſs as from humanity. So that one would not eaſily conceive, how any Chriſtians of the purer ages, eſpecially any of the Fathers of the Church, could confound theſe, and miſtake one of the fouleſt errors of heatheniſm, for a branch of true Chriſtianity.

3. Nor does Chriſtian meekneſs imply, the being without zeal for God, any more than it does ignorance or inſenſibility. No; it keeps clear of every extreme, whether in exceſs or defect. It does not deſtroy but balance the affections, which the God of nature never deſigned ſhould be rooted out by grace, but only brought and kept under due regulations. It poiſes the mind aright. It holds an even ſcale, with regard to anger, and ſorrow, and fear: preſerving the mean in every circumſtance of life, and not declining either to the right hand or the left.

4. Meekneſs therefore ſeems properly to relate to ourſelves. But it may be referred either to God or our neighbour. When this due compoſure of mind has reference to God, it is uſually

termed reſignation; a calm acquieſcence in whatſoever is his will concerning us, even though it may not be pleaſing to nature; ſaying continually, "It is the Lord; let him do what ſeemeth him good." When we conſider it more ſtrictly with regard to ourſelves, we ſtile it patience or contentedneſs. When it is exerted toward other men, then it is mildneſs to the good, and gentleneſs to the evil.

5. They who are truly meek, can clearly diſcern what is evil: and they can only ſuffer it. They are *ſenſible* of every thing of this kind, but ſtill meekneſs holds the reins. They are exceeding *zealous for the Lord of hoſts*; but their zeal is always guided by knowledge, and tempered in every thought and word, and work, with the love of man as well as the love of God. They do not deſire to extinguiſh any of the paſſions, which God has for wiſe ends implanted in their nature. But they have the maſtery of all; they hold them all in ſubjection, and employ them only in ſubſervience to thoſe ends. And thus even the harſher and more unpleaſing paſſions, are applicable to the nobleſt purpoſes. Even hatred, and anger, and fear, when engaged againſt ſin, and regulated by faith and love, are as walls and bulwarks to the ſoul, ſo that the wicked one cannot approach to hurt it.

6. It is evident, this divine temper, is not only to abide, but to increaſe in us day by day. Occaſions of exerciſing, and thereby increating it, will never be wanting while we remain upon earth. "We have need of patience, that after we have done [and ſuffered] the will of God, we may receive the promiſe." We have need of reſignation, that we may in all circumſtances ſay, "Not

"Not as I will, but as thou wilt." And we have need of *gentleneſs towards all men;* but eſpecially toward the evil and unthankful: otherwiſe we ſhall be overcome of evil, inſtead of overcoming evil with good.

7. Nor does meekneſs reſtrain only the outward act, as the Scribes and Phariſees taught of old, and the miſerable Teachers, who are not taught of God, will not fail to do in all ages. Our Lord guards us againſt this, and ſhews the true extent of it, in the following words: "Ye have heard, that it was ſaid of them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill; and whoſoever ſhall kill ſhall be in danger of the judgment," ver. 21, &c.

"But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall be angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment; and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Raca, ſhall be in danger of the council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire."

8. Our Lord here ranks under the head of murder, even that anger which goes no farther than the heart; which does not ſhow itſelf by any outward unkindneſs; no, not ſo much as a paſſionate word.

Whoſoever is angry with his brother, with any man living, ſeeing we are all brethren, whoſoever feels any unkindneſs in his heart, any temper contrary to love: whoſoever is angry *without a cauſe*, without a ſufficient cauſe, or farther than that cauſe requires, *ſhall be in danger of the judgment*, ἔνοχος ἔστι *ſhall* in that moment *be obnoxious to* the righteous judgment of God.

But would not one be inclined to prefer the reading of thoſe copies, which omit the word, εἰκῇ, without

without a cause? Is it not entirely superfluous? For if *anger at persons* be a temper contrary to love, how can there be a cause, a sufficient cause for it? Any that will justify it in the sight of God?

Anger at sin we allow. In this sense we may *be angry and* yet we *sin not.* In this sense our Lord himself is once recorded to have been angry. "He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." He was grieved at the sinners, and angry at the sin. And this is undoubtedly right before God.

9. *And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca:* whosoever shall give way to anger, so as to utter any contemptuous word. It is observed by Commentators, that *Raca* is a Syriac word, which properly signifies, *empty, vain, foolish:* so that it is as inoffensive an expression as can well be used, toward one at whom we are displeased. And yet whosoever shall use this, as our Lord assures us, *shall be in danger of the council:* rather, shall be obnoxious thereto: he shall be liable to a severer sentence from the Judge of all the earth.

But whosoever shall say, Thou fool—Whosoever shall so give place to the devil, as to break out into reviling, into designedly reproachful and contumelious language, *shall be obnoxious to hell fire,* shall in that instant be liable to the highest condemnation. It should be observed, that our Lord describes all these, as obnoxious to capital punishment. The first, to strangling, usually inflicted on those who were condemned in one of the inferior courts: the second, to stoning, which was frequently inflicted on those who were condemned by the great Council at *Jerusalem;* the third,

third, to burning alive, inflicted only on the higheſt offenders, in the *Valley of the ſons of Hinnom.* Γῆ Ἐννὼμ from which that word is evidently taken, which we tranſlate hell.

10. And whereas men naturally imagine, that God will excuſe their defect in ſome duties, for their exactneſs in others, our Lord next takes care to cut off that vain, though common imagination. He ſhews, That it is impoſſible for any ſinner to *commute* with God: who will not accept one duty for another, nor take a part of obedience for the whole. He warns us, That the performing our duty to God, will not excuſe us from our duty to our neighbour: that works of piety, as they are called, will be ſo far from commending us to God, if we are wanting in charity, that on the contrary, that want of charity will make all thoſe works an abomination to the Lord.

Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, on account of thy unkind behaviour toward him, of thy calling him, *Raca,* or *Thou fool;* think not that thy gift will atone for thy anger; or that it will find any acceptance with God, ſo long as thy conſcience is defiled with the guilt of unrepented ſin. *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother,* (at leaſt, do all that in thee lies toward being reconciled) *and then come and offer thy gift,* ver. 23, 24.

11. And let there be no delay in what ſo nearly concerneth thy ſoul. *Agree with thine adverſary quickly*—Now: upon the ſpot—*while thou art in the way with him*—if it be poſſible, before he go out of thy ſight—*Leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to the judge*—Leſt he appeal to God,

the Judge of all, *and the judge deliver thee to the officer*, to *ſatan*, the executioner of the wrath of God, *and thou be caſt into priſon*, into hell, there to be reſerved to the judgment of the great day. "Verily I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing." But this it is impoſſible for thee ever to do; ſeeing thou haſt nothing to pay. Therefore if thou art once in that priſon, the ſmoke of thy torment muſt *aſcend up for ever and ever*.

12. Mean time "the meek ſhall inherit the earth." Such is the fooliſhneſs of worldly wiſdom! The wiſe of the world had warned them again and again, "That if they did not reſent ſuch treatment, if they would tamely ſuffer themſelves to be thus abuſed, there would be no living for them upon earth; that they would never be able to procure the common neceſſaries of life, nor to keep even what they had; that they could expect no peace, no quiet poſſeſſion, no enjoyment of any thing." Moſt true—ſuppoſe there were no God in the world; or ſuppoſe he did not concern himſelf with the children of men. But "when God ariſeth to judgment, and to help all the meek upon earth:" how doth he laugh all this heathen wiſdom to ſcorn, and turn the "fierceneſs of man to his praiſe!" He takes a peculiar care, to provide them with all things needful for life and godlineſs. He ſecures to them the proviſion he hath made, in ſpite of the force, fraud, or malice of men. And what he ſecures, he *gives* them *richly to enjoy*. It is ſweet to them, be it little or much. As *in patience* they *poſſeſs their ſouls*, ſo they truly poſſeſs whatever God hath given them. They are always content, always pleaſed with what they have. It pleaſes them,

them, becauſe it pleaſes God. So that while their heart, their deſire, their joy is in heaven, they may truly be ſaid to *inherit the earth*.

13. But there ſeems to be a yet farther meaning in theſe words, even that they ſhall have a more eminent part *in the New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*, in that inheritance, a general deſcription of which (and the particulars we ſhall know hereafter) St. John hath given in the 20th chapter of the Revelation. "And I ſaw an angel come down from heaven—and he laid hold on the dragon, that old ſerpent—and bound him a thouſand years—And I ſaw the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the Word of God, and of them which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years. But the reſt of the dead lived not again, until the thouſand years were expired. This is the firſt reſurrection: bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power. But they ſhall be prieſts of God and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years."

II. 1. Our Lord has hitherto been more immediately employed, in removing the hinderances of true Religion: ſuch is pride, the firſt grand hindrance of all religion, which is taken away by *poverty of ſpirit*; levity, and thoughtleſſneſs, which prevented any Religion from taking root in the ſoul, till they are removed by holy *mourning*: ſuch are anger, impatience, diſcontent, which are all healed by Chriſtian *meekneſs*. And when once

once these hindrances are removed, these evil diseases of the soul, which were continually raising false cravings therein, and filling it with sickly appetites, the native appetite of a heaven-born spirit returns; it hungers and thirsts after righteousness: and "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

2. Righteousness (as was observed before) is the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is every holy and heavenly temper in one; springing from, as well as terminating in the love of God, as our Father and Redeemer, and the love of all men, for his sake.

3. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after* this: in order fully to understand which expression we should observe, First, That hunger and thirst are the strongest of all our bodily appetites. In like manner this hunger in the soul, this thirst after the image of God, is the strongest of all our spiritual appetites, when it is once awakened in the heart: yea, it swallows up all the rest in that one great desire, To be renewed after the likeness of him that created us. We should, Secondly, observe, That from the time we begin to hunger and thirst, those appetites do not cease but are more and more craving and importunate, till we either eat and drink or die. And even so, from the time that we begin to hunger and thirst after the whole mind which was in Christ, these spiritual appetites do not cease, but cry after their food with more and more importunity. Nor can they possibly cease, before they are satisfied, while there is any spiritual life remaining. We may, Thirdly, observe, That hunger and thirst are satisfied with nothing but

but meat and drink. If you would give to him that is hungry all the world beſide, all the elegance of apparel, all the trappings of ſtate, all the treaſure upon earth, yea thouſands of gold and ſilver: if you would pay him ever ſo much honour, he regards it not; all theſe things are then of no account with him. He would ſtill ſay, Theſe are not the things I want; give me food, or elſe I die. The very ſame is the caſe with every ſoul that truly hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs. He can find no comfort in any thing but this: he can be ſatisfied with nothing elſe. Whatever you offer beſides, it is lightly eſteemed; whether it be riches, or honour, or pleaſure, he ſtill ſays, This is not the thing which I want. Give me love or elſe I die!

4. And it is as impoſſible to ſatisfy ſuch a ſoul, a ſoul that is athirſt for God, the living God, with what the world accounts Religion, as with what they account happineſs. The Religion of the world implies three things: Firſt, The doing no harm, the abſtaining from outward ſin; at leaſt from ſuch as is ſcandalous, as robbery, theft, common ſwearing, drunkenneſs: Secondly, The doing good, the relieving the poor, the being charitable, as it is called: Thirdly, The uſing the means of grace; at leaſt, the going to Church and to the Lord's Supper. He in whom theſe three marks are found, is termed by the world a religious man. But will this ſatisfy him who hungers after God? No. It is not food for his ſoul. He wants a Religion of a nobler kind, a Religion higher and deeper than this. He can no more feed on this poor, ſhallow, formal thing, than he can *fill his belly with the Eaſt wind.* True, he is careful to abſtain from the very appearance

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pearance of evil: he is zealous of good works. He attends all the ordinances of God. But all this is not what he longs for. This is only the outside of that Religion, which he insatiably hungers after. The knowledge of God in *Christ Jesus, the life which is hid with Christ in God*, the being *joined unto the Lord* in *one spirit*, the *fellowship with the Father and the Son*: the *walking in the light as God is in the light*, the being *purified even as he is pure*: this is the Religion, the Righteousness he thirsts after. Nor can he rest, till he thus rests in God.

5. "Blessed are they who thus hunger and thirst after righteousness: For they shall be filled:" They shall be filled with the things which they long for; even with righteousness and true holiness. God shall satisfy them with the blessings of his goodness, with the felicity of his chosen. He shall feed them with the bread of heaven, with the manna of his love. He shall give them to drink of his pleasures as out of the river, which he that drinketh of, shall never thirst: only for more and more of the water of life. This thirst shall endure for ever.

The painful thirst, the fond desire
Thy joyous presence shall remove:
But my full soul shall still require
A whole eternity of love.

6. Whosoever then thou art, to whom God hath given to *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, cry unto him that thou mayest never lose that inestimable gift, that this divine appetite may never cease. If many rebuke thee, and bid thee hold thy peace, regard them not, yea, cry so much the more, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me!" "Let

"Let me not live, but to be holy as thou art holy!" No more *spend thy money for that which is not bread*, nor thy *labour for that which satisfieth not*. Canst thou hope to dig happiness out of the earth? To find it in the things of the world, O trample under foot all its pleasures, despise its honours, count its riches as dung and dross: yea, and all the things which are beneath the sun, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; for the entire renewal of thy soul in that image of God, wherein it was originally created. Beware of quenching that blessed hunger and thirst, by what the world calls Religion: a Religion of form, of outside shew, which leaves the heart as earthly and sensual as ever. Let nothing satisfy thee but the power of godliness, but a Religion that is spirit and life; the dwelling in God and God in thee, the being an inhabitant of eternity; the entering in by the blood of sprinkling "within the veil, and sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus."

III. 1. And the more they are filled with the life of God, the more tenderly will they be concerned for those who are still without God in the world, still dead in trespasses and sins. Nor shall this concern for others lose its reward. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."

The word used by our Lord, more immediately implies, the compassionate, the tender-hearted: those who far from despising, earnestly grieve for those that do not hunger after God. This eminent part of brotherly love, is here (by a common figure) put for the whole: so that *the merciful*, in the full sense of the term, are they who *love their neighbours as themselves*.

2. Because

2. Becauſe of the vaſt importance of this love, without which, "though we ſpake with the tongues of men and angels, though we had the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge, though we had all faith ſo as to remove mountains; yea, though we gave all our goods to feed the poor, and our very bodies to be burned, it would profit us nothing:" the wiſdom of God has given us by the Apoſtle Paul, a full and particular account of it: by conſidering which we ſhall moſt clearly diſcern, who are the *merciful* that ſhall *obtain mercy*.

3. *Charity*, or love (as it were to be wiſhed it had been rendered throughout, being a far plainer and leſs ambiguous word) the love of our neighbour as Chriſt hath loved us, *ſuffereth long*, is patient toward all men. It ſuffers all the weakneſs, ignorance, errors, infirmities, all the frowardneſs and littleneſs of faith, in the children of God; all the malice and wickedneſs of the children of the world. And it ſuffers all this, not only for a time, for a ſhort ſeaſon, but to the end: ſtill feeding our enemy when he hungers: if he thirſt, ſtill giving him drink: thus continually *heaping coals of fire*, of melting love, *upon his head*.

4. And in every ſtep toward this deſirable end, the *overcoming evil with good*, *Love is kind*: (χρηστεύεται· a word not eaſily tranſlated) it is ſoft, mild, benign. It ſtands at the utmoſt diſtance from moroſeneſs, from all harſhneſs or ſourneſs of ſpirit; and inſpires the ſufferer at once with the moſt amiable ſweetneſs, and the moſt fervent and tender affection.

5. Conſequently, *Love envieth not*, it is impoſſible it ſhould, it is directly oppoſite to that baneful

ful temper. It cannot be, that he who has this tender affection to all, who earneſtly wiſhes all temporal and ſpiritual bleſſings, all good things in this world and the world to come, to every ſoul that God hath made, ſhould be pained at his beſtowing any good gift, on any child of man. If he has himſelf received the ſame, he does not grieve, but rejoice that another partakes of the common benefit. If he has not, he bleſſes God that his brother at leaſt has, and is herein happier than himſelf. And the greater his love, the more does he rejoice, in the bleſſings of all mankind: the farther is he removed from every kind and degree of envy toward any creature.

6. Love ὁ περπερεύεται. *Vaunteth not itſelf*, which coincides with the very next words, but rather (as the word likewiſe properly imports) *is not raſh* or *haſty* in judging. It will not haſtily condemn any one. It does not paſs a ſevere ſentence, on a ſlight or ſudden view of things. It firſt weighs all the evidence, particularly that which is brought in favour of the accuſed. A true lover of his neighbour, is not like the generality of men, who even in caſes of the niceſt nature, "ſee a little, preſume a great deal, and ſo jump to the concluſion." No: he proceeds with warineſs and circumſpection, taking heed to every ſtep: willingly ſubſcribing to that rule of the ancient Heathen, (O where will the modern Chriſtian appear!) "I am ſo far from lightly believing what one man ſays againſt another, that I will not eaſily believe what a man ſays againſt himſelf. I will always allow him ſecond thoughts, and many times counſel too."

7. It follows, Love *is not puffed* up. It does not incline or ſuffer any man, "to think more

highly of himself than he ought to think:" but rather *to think soberly*. Yea, it humbles the soul unto the dust. It destroys all high conceits, engendering pride, and makes us rejoice to be as nothing, to be little and vile, the lowest of all, the servant of all. They who are *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*, cannot but *in honour prefer one another*. Those who *having the same love* are *of one accord*, do *in lowliness of mind each esteem other better than themselves*.

8. "It doth not behave itself unseemly." It is not rude, or willingly offensive to any. It *renders to all their due; fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour:* courtesy, civility, humanity to all the world; in their several degrees *honouring all men*. A late Writer defines good-breeding, nay, the highest degree of it, Politeness, "a continual desire to please, appearing in all the behaviour." But if so, there is none so well-bred as a Christian, a lover of all mankind. For he cannot but desire to "please all men for their good, to edification." And these desires cannot be hid: it will necessarily appear in all his intercourse with man. For his *love is without dissimulation;* it will appear in all his actions and conversation: yea, and will constrain him, though without guile, to "become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some."

9. And in becoming all things to all men, *Love seeketh not her own*. In striving to please all men, the lover of mankind has no eye at all to his own temporal advantage. He covets no man's silver, or gold, or apparel: he desires nothing but the salvation of their souls. Yea, in some sense he may be said, *not to seek his own* spiritual, any more than temporal advantage. For while he is on the full

full ſtretch to ſave their ſouls from death, he, as it were forgets himſelf. He does not think of himſelf ſo long as that zeal for the glory of God ſwallows him up. Nay, at ſome times, he may almoſt ſeem, through an exceſs of love, to give up himſelf, both his ſoul and his body: while he cries out with *Moſes*, * "O! this people have ſinned a great ſin. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their ſin. And if not, blot me out of the book which thou haſt written!" Or with St. *Paul*, † "I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt, for my brethren my kinſmen according to the fleſh!"

10. No marvel that ſuch *Love is not provoked: ἀ παροξύνεται.* Let it be obſerved, the word *eaſily*, ſtrangely inſerted in the tranſlation, is not in the original. St. *Paul's* words are abſolute. *Love is not provoked:* it is not provoked to unkindneſs toward any one. Occaſions indeed will frequently occur; outward provocations of various kinds: but love does not yield to provocation. It triumphs over all. In all trials it looketh unto Jeſus, and is more than conqueror in his love.

It is not improbable, that our Tranſlators inſerted that word, as it were to *excuſe* the Apoſtle; who, as they ſuppoſed, might otherwiſe appear to be wanting, in the very love which he ſo beautifully deſcribes. They ſeem to have ſuppoſed this from a phraſe in the Acts of the Apoſtles; which is likewiſe very inaccurately tranſlated. When *Paul* and *Barnabas* diſagreed concerning *John*, the tranſlation runs thus, ‖ "And the contention was ſo ſharp between them that they departed aſunder." This naturally induces the reader to ſuppoſe, that they were equally ſharp therein;

* Exod. xxxii. 31, 32. † Rom. ix. 3. ‖ Acts xv. 39.

therein: that St. *Paul*, who was undoubtedly right, with regard to the point in queſtion (it being quite improper to take *John* with them again, who had deſerted them before) was as much provoked as *Barnabas* who gave ſuch a proof of his anger, as to leave *the work* for which he had been *ſet apart by the Holy Ghoſt*. But the original imports no ſuch thing: nor does it affirm, that St. *Paul* was provoked at all. It ſimply ſays και εγενετο παροξυσμος· *And there was a ſharpneſs, a paroxyſm* of anger: in conſequence of which *Barnabas* left St. *Paul*, took *John*, and went his own way. *Paul* then *choſe Silas and departed, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God*; (which is not ſaid concerning *Barnabas*) *and he went through Syria and Cilicia*, as he had propoſed, *confirming the Churches*. But to return.

11. Love prevents a thouſand provocations which would otherwiſe ariſe, becauſe *it thinketh no evil*. Indeed the merciful man cannot avoid knowing many things that are evil, he cannot but ſee them with his own eyes and hear them with his own ears. For love does not put out his eyes, ſo that it is impoſſible for him, not to ſee that ſuch things are done. Neither does it take away his underſtanding, any more than his ſenſes, ſo that he cannot but know that they are evil. Yet ὁ λογιζεται το κακον The word λογιζεται *(thinketh)* does not refer, either to our ſeeing and hearing, or to the firſt and involuntary acts of our underſtanding: but to our willingly *thinking* what we need not: our *inferring* evil, where it does not appear: to our *reaſoning* concerning things which we do not ſee; our *ſuppoſing* what we have neither ſeen nor heard. This is what true love abſolutely deſtroys. It tears up, root

and

and branch, all *imagining* what we have not known. It casts out all jealousies, all evil surmisings, all readiness to believe evil. It is frank, open, unsuspicious; and as it cannot design, so neither does it fear evil.

12. *It rejoiceth not in iniquity:* common as this is, even among those who bear the name of Christ; who scruple not to rejoice over their enemy, when he falleth either into affliction, or error, or sin. Indeed how hardly can they avoid this, who are zealously attached to any party? How difficult is it for them not to be pleased with any fault which they discover in those of the opposite party? With any real or supposed blemish, either in their principles or practice? What warm defender of any cause is clear of these? Yea, who is so calm as to be altogether free? Who does not rejoice when his adversary makes a false step, which he thinks will advantage his own cause? Only a man of love. He alone weeps over either the sin or folly of his enemy, takes no pleasure in hearing or repeating it, but rather desires that it may be forgotten for ever.

13. But he *rejoiceth in the truth* wheresoever it is found, in the *truth which is after godliness*, bringing forth its proper fruit, holiness of heart and holiness of conversation. He rejoices to find, that even those who oppose him, whether with regard to opinions or some points of practice, are nevertheless lovers of God, and in other respects unreprovable. He is glad to hear good of them, and to speak all he can consistently with Truth and Justice. Indeed, good in general is his glory and joy, whenever diffused throughout the race of mankind. As a citizen of the world he claims a share in the happiness of all the inhabitants of

it. Becauſe he is a man, he is not unconcerned in the welfare of any man: but enjoys whatſoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and good-will among men.

14. This Love *covereth all things*. (So without all doubt πάντα γε γε ſhould be tranſlated: for otherwiſe it would be the very ſame with πάντα ὑπομένει· *endureth all things*.) Becauſe the merciful man *rejoiceth not in iniquity*, neither does he willingly make mention of it. Whatever evil he ſees, hears or knows, he nevertheleſs conceals, ſo far as he can, without making himſelf *partaker of other men's ſins*. Whereſoever or with whomſoever he is, if he ſees any thing which he approves not, it goes not out of his lips, unleſs to the perſon concerned, if haply he may gain his brother. So far is he from making the faults or failings of others the matter of his converſation, that of the abſent he never does ſpeak at all, unleſs he can ſpeak well. A tale-bearer, a backbiter, a whiſperer, an evil-ſpeaker, is to him all one as a murderer. He would juſt as ſoon cut his neighbour's throat, as thus murder his reputation. Juſt as ſoon would he think of diverting himſelf by ſetting fire to his neighbour's houſe, as of thus "ſcattering abroad arrows, firebrands, and death, and ſaying, Am I not in ſport?"

He makes one only exception. Sometimes he is convinced, that it is for the glory of God, or (which comes to the ſame) the good of his neighbour, that an evil ſhould not be covered. In this caſe, for the benefit of the innocent, he is conſtrained to declare the guilty. But even here, 1. He will not ſpeak at all, till love, ſuperior love conſtrains him. 2. He cannot do it from a general confuſed view of doing good, or of promoting

noting the glory of God, but from a clear sight of some particular end, some determinate good which he pursues. 3. Still he cannot speak, unless he be fully convinced, that this very means is necessary to that end; that the end cannot be answered, at least not so effectually by any other way. 4. He then doth it with the utmost sorrow and reluctance, using it as the last and worst medicine, a desperate remedy in a desperate case, a kind of poison never to be used but to expel poison. Consequently, 5. He uses it as sparingly as possible. And this he does with fear and trembling, lest he should transgress the law of love by speaking too much, more than he would have done by not speaking at all.

15. Love *believeth all things*. It is always willing to think the best; to put the most favourable construction on every thing. It is ever ready to believe whatever may tend to the advantage of any one's character. It is easily convinced of (what it earnestly desires) the innocence or integrity of any man; or, at least, of the sincerity of his repentance, if he had once erred from the way. It is glad to excuse whatever is amiss: to condemn the offender as little as possible, and to make all the allowance for human weakness, which can be done without betraying the truth of God.

16. And when it can no longer believe, then Love *hopeth all things*. Is any evil related of any man? Love hopes, that the relation is not true, that the thing related was never done? Is it certain it was?—"But perhaps it was not done with such circumstances as are related; so that allowing the fact, there is room to hope, it was not so ill as it is represented." Was the action apparently,

rently, undeniably evil? Love hopes the intention was not so. Is it clear, the design was evil too?—"Yet it might not spring from the settled temper of the heart, but from a start of passion, or from some vehement temptation, which hurried the man beyond himself." And even when it cannot be doubted, but all the actions, designs and tempers are equally evil: still Love hopes that God will at last make bare his arm, and get himself the victory; and that "there shall be joy in heaven over this one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

17. Lastly, *It endureth all things.* This completes the character of him that is truly merciful. He endureth not some, not many things only, not most, but absolutely *all things.* Whatever the injustice, the malice, the cruelty of men, can inflict, he is able to suffer. He calls nothing intolerable; he never says of any thing, "This is not to be borne." No: he can, not only do, but suffer all things through Christ, which strengtheneth him. And all he suffers does not destroy his love, nor impair it in the least. It is proof against all. It is a flame that burns even in the midst of the great deep. "Many waters cannot quench his love, neither can the floods drown it." It triumphs over all. It *never faileth*, either in time or in eternity.

"In obedience to what heaven decrees,
Knowledge shall fail and prophecy shall cease,
But lasting Charity's more ample sway,
Nor bound by time, nor subject to decay,
In happy triumph shall for ever live,
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive."

So

So shall *the merciful obtain mercy:* not only by the blessing of God upon all their ways, by his now repaying the love they bear to their brethren, a thousand fold into their own bosom: but likewise by *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, in the "kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world."

18. For a little while you may say, "Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!" You may pour out your soul, and bemoan the loss of true, genuine love in the earth. Lost indeed! You may well say, (but not in the ancient sense) "See how *these Christians* love one another!" These Christian kingdoms, that are tearing out each other's bowels, desolating one another with fire and sword! These Christian armies, that are sending each other by thousands, yea, by ten thousands quick into hell! These Christian nations, that are all on fire with intestine broils, party against party, faction against faction! These Christian cities, where deceit and fraud, oppression and wrong, yea, robbery and murder, go not out of their streets! These Christian families, torn asunder with envy, jealousy, anger, domestic jars, without number, without end! Yea, what is most dreadful, most to be lamented of all, these Christian Churches! Churches, (*Tell it not in Gath*—But alas, how can we hide it, either from Jews, Turks, or Pagans?) that bear the name of Christ the Prince of peace, and wage continual war with each other! That convert sinners by burning them alive: that are *drunk with the blood of the saints!*—Does this praise belong only to *Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth?* Nay, verily;

ly; but Reformed Churches (ſo called) have fairly learned to tread in her ſteps. Proteſtant Churches too know to perſecute, when they have power in their hands, even unto blood. And mean while, how do they alſo anathematize each other! Devote each other to the nethermoſt hell! What wrath, what contention, what malice, what bitterneſs, is every where found among them? Even where they agree in eſſentials, and only differ in opinions, or in the circumſtantials of religion. Who *follows after* only *the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another?* O God! How long? Shall thy promiſe fail? Fear it not, ye little flock. Againſt hope believe in hope. It is your Father's good pleaſure, yet to renew the face of the earth. Surely all theſe things ſhall come to an end, and the inhabitants of the earth ſhall learn righteouſneſs. "Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they know war any more. The mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed on the top of the mountains:" and all the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of our God. "They ſhall not then hurt nor deſtroy in all his holy mountain;" but "they ſhall call their walls ſalvation, and their gates praiſe." They ſhall all be without ſpot or blemiſh, loving one another, even as Chriſt hath loved us.—Be thou part of the firſtfruits, if the harveſt is not yet. Do thou love thy neighbour as thyſelf. The Lord God fill thy heart with ſuch a love to every ſoul, that thou mayeſt be ready to lay down thy life for his ſake! May thy ſoul continually overflow with love, ſwallowing up every unkind and unholy temper, till he calleth thee up into the region of love, there to reign with him for ever and ever!

SERMON

SERMON XXII.

DISCOURSE the THIRD, on our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW V. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Bleſſed are the pure in heart; for they ſhall ſee God.

Bleſſed are the peace-makers; for they ſhall be called the children of God.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs-ſake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

1. HOW excellent things are ſpoken of the love of our neighbour! It is "the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment." Without this, all we have, all we do, all we ſuffer, is of no value in the ſight of God. But

But it is that love of our neighbour which ſprings from the love of God: otherwiſe itſelf is nothing worth. It behoves us therefore to examine well upon what foundation our love of our neighbour ſtands: whether it is really built, upon the love of God? Whether *we* do *love him, becauſe he firſt loved us?* Whether we are *pure in heart?* For this is the foundation which ſhall never be moved. "Bleſſed are the pure in heart; for they ſhall ſee God."

2. *The pure in heart* are they, whoſe hearts God hath *purified even as he is pure;* who are purified through faith in the blood of Jeſus, from every unholy affection; who being *cleanſed from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfect holineſs in the* loving *fear of God.* They are, through the power of his grace, purified from pride, by the deepeſt poverty of ſpirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent paſſion, by meekneſs and gentleneſs; from every deſire but to pleaſe and enjoy God, to know and love him more and more, by that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, which now engroſſes their whole ſoul: ſo that now they love the Lord their God, with all their heart, and with all their ſoul, and mind, and ſtrength.

3. But how little has this *purity of heart* been regarded, by the falſe teachers of all ages! They have taght men barely, to abſtain from ſuch outward impurities, as God hath forbidden by name. But they did not ſtrike at the heart; and by not guarding againſt, they in effect, countenanced inward corruptions.

A remarkable inſtance of this, our Lord has given us, in the following words: "Ye have heard, that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou

'Thou ſhalt not commit adultery," ver. 28. And in explaining this, thoſe blind leaders of the blind, only inſiſt on men's abſtaining from the outward act. "But I ſay unto you, whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," ver. 28. For God requireth truth in the inward parts. He ſearcheth the heart and trieth the reins. And, *if* thou *incline unto iniquity with* thy *heart*, *the Lord will not hear* thee.

4. And God admits no excuſe for retaining any thing which is an occaſion of impurity. Therefore, "if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell," ver. 29. If a perſon as dear to thee as thy right eye, be an occaſion of thy thus offending God, a means of exciting unholy deſire in thy ſoul; delay not; forcibly ſeparate from them. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell," ver. 30. If any who ſeems as neceſſary to thee as thy right hand, be an occaſion of ſin, of impure deſire; even though it were never to go beyond the heart, never to break out in word or action: conſtrain thyſelf to an entire and final parting: cut them off at a ſtroke; give them up to God. Any loſs, whether of pleaſure or ſubſtance or friends, is preferable to the loſs of thy ſoul.

Two ſteps only it may not be improper to take, before ſuch an abſolute and final ſeparation. Firſt, Try whether the unclean ſpirit may not be driven

out by fasting and prayer, and by carefully abstaining from every action and word and look which thou hast found to be an occasion of evil. Secondly, If thou art not by this means delivered ask counsel of him that watcheth over thy soul, or at least of some who have experience in the ways of God, touching the time and manner of that separation. But confer not with flesh and blood, lest thou be "given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie."

5. Nor may marriage itself, holy and honourable as it is, be used, as a pretence for giving a loose to our desires. Indeed, "It hath been said, whosoever will put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement." And then all was well; though he alledged no cause, but that he did not like her; or liked another better. "But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication" (that is, adultery; the word πορνεία signifying unchastity in general, either in the married or unmarried state) causeth her to commit adultery, [if she marry again;] and whosoever shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." ver. 31, 32.

All polygamy is clearly forbidden in these words, wherein our Lord expressly declares, That for any woman who has a husband alive, to marry again is adultery. By parity of Reason, it is adultery for any man to marry again, so long as he has a wife alive. Yea, although they were divorced: unless that divorce had been for the cause of adultery. In that only case, there is no Scripture which forbids the innocent person to marry again.

6. Such

6. Such is the purity of heart which God requires, and works in thoſe who believe on the Son of his love. And *bleſſed are they* who are thus *pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.* He will *manifeſt himſelf unto them,* not only *as he doth not unto the world,* but as he doth not always to his own children. He will bleſs them with the cleareſt communications of his Spirit, the moſt intimate "fellowſhip with the Father and with the Son." He will cauſe his preſence to go continually before them, and the light of his countenance to ſhine upon them. It is the ceaſeleſs prayer of their heart, "I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory:" and they have the petition they aſk of him. They now ſee him by faith, (the veil of fleſh being made, as it were tranſparent) even in theſe his loweſt works, in all that ſurround them, in all that God has created and made. They ſee him in the height above, and in the depth beneath; they ſee him filling all in all.

The pure in heart ſee all things full of God. They ſee him in the firmament of heaven, in the moon, walking in brightneſs, in the ſun when he rejoiceth as a giant to run his courſe. They ſee him "making the clouds his chariots, and walking upon the wings of the wind." They ſee him "preparing rain for the earth, and bleſſing the increaſe of it; giving graſs for the cattle, and green herb for the uſe of man." They ſee the Creator of all, wiſely governing all, and "upholding all things by the word of his power. O Lord! our Governor! How excellent is thy name in all the world!"

7. In all his providences relating to themſelves, to their ſouls or bodies, the pure in heart do more particularly ſee God. They ſee his hand ever

over them for good; giving them all things in weight and measure, numbering the hairs of their head, making a hedge round about them and all that they have, and disposing all the circumstances of their life, according to the depth both of his wisdom and mercy.

8. But in a more especial manner, they see God in his ordinances. Whether they appear in the great congregation, to *pay him the honour due unto his name, and worship* him *in the beauty of holiness*; or *enter into their closets* and there pour out their souls before their *Father which is in secret*: whether they search the Oracles of God, or hear the Ambassadors of Christ proclaiming glad tidings of salvation; or by eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, *shew forth his death, till he come* in the clouds of heaven: in all these his appointed ways, they find such a near approach as cannot be expressed. They see him, as it were, face to face, and *talk with him, as a man talketh with his friend:* a fit preparation for those mansions above, wherein they shall *see him as he is.*

9. But how far were they from seeing God, who having heard, "that it had been said by them of old time, ver. 33. Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:" interpreted it thus, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, when thou sweareſt by the Lord Jehovah. Thou *shalt perform unto the Lord* these *thine oaths.* But as to other oaths, he regardeth them not.

So the Pharisees taught. They not only allowed all manner of swearing in common conversation: but accounted even forswearing a little thing, so that they had not sworn by the peculiar name of God.

But

But our Lord here abſolutely forbids all common ſwearing, as well as all falſe ſwearing: and ſhews the heinouſneſs of both, by the ſame awful conſideration, That every creature is God's, and he is every where preſent, in all, and over all.

* "I ſay unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne." And therefore this is the ſame as to ſwear by him, who ſitteth upon the circle of the heavens: † "Nor by the earth; for it is his footſtool;" and he is as intimately preſent in earth as heaven: "neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the city of the great King," and God is well known in her palaces. ‖ "Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head; becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black:" becauſe even this, it is plain, is not thine, but God's, the ſole diſpoſer of all in heaven and earth. § "But let your communication," your converſation, your diſcourſe with each other, "be yea, yea; nay, nay;" a bare, ſerious affirming or denying "for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil:" ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστιν *is of the evil one*; proceedeth from the devil, and is a mark of his children.

10. That our Lord does not here forbid, the *ſwearing in judgment and truth*, when we are required ſo to do by a Magiſtrate, may appear, 1. From the occaſion of this part of his diſcourſe, the abuſe he was here reproving, which was falſe ſwearing, and common ſwearing; the ſwearing before a Magiſtrate being quite out of the queſtion. 2. From the very words wherein he forms the general concluſion, *Let your communication*, or diſcourſe, *be yea, yea; nay, nay.* 3. From his own example; for he anſwered himſelf upon oath, when required by a Magiſtrate. When ¶ *the*

* Ver. 34. † Ver. 35. ‖ Ver. 36. § Ver. 37.
¶ Matt. xxvi. 63. 64.

High Prieſt ſaid unto him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Chriſt, the Son of God?" Jeſus immediately anſwered in the affirmative, "Thou haſt ſaid" (i. e. the truth) "Nevertheleſs (or rather Moreover) "I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." 4. From the example of God, even the Father,* who "willing the more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath." 5. From the example of St. Paul, who, we *think had the Spirit of God*, and well underſtood the mind of his Maſter. † "God is my witneſs, ſaith he, to the Romans, that without ceaſing, I make mention of you always in my prayers:" to the Corinthians, § "I call God to record upon my ſoul, that to ſpare you I came not as yet unto Corinth;" and to the Philippians, ‖ "God is my record, how greatly I long after you, in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt." (Hence it undeniably appears, That if the Apoſtle knew the meaning of his Lord's words, they did not forbid ſwearing on weighty occations, even to one another: how much leſs before a Magiſtrate?) And laſtly, From that aſſertion of the great Apoſtle, concerning ſolemn ſwearing in general, (which it is impoſſible he could have mentioned without any touch of blame, if his Lord had totally forbidden it) ¶ "Men verily ſwear by the greater, [by one greater than themſelves] and an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all ſtrife."

11. But

* Heb. vi. 17. † Rom. i. 9. § 2 Cor i. 23.
‖ Phil. i. 8. ¶ Heb. vi. 36.

11. But the great leſſon which our bleſſed Lord inculcates here, and which he illuſtrates by this example is, That God is in all things, and that we are to ſee the Creator in the glaſs of every creature; that we ſhould uſe and look upon nothing ſeparate from God, which indeed is a kind of practical Atheiſm; but with a true magnificence of thought, ſurvey heaven and earth and all that is therein, as contained by God in the hollow of his hand, who by his intimate preſence holds them all in being, who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is, in a true ſenſe, the ſoul of the univerſe.

II. 1. Thus far our Lord has been more directly employed, in teaching the Religion of the Heart. He has ſhewn, what Chriſtians are to be. He proceeds to ſhew, what they are to do alſo: how inward holineſs is to exert itſelf, in our outward converſation. "Bleſſed, ſaith he, are the peace-makers; for they ſhall be called the children of God."

2. *The peace-makers:* the word in the original is οἱ εἰρηνοποιοὶ. It is well known that εἰρήνη in the ſacred writings, implies all manner of good; every bleſſing that relates either to the ſoul or the body, to time or eternity. Accordingly when St. Paul in the titles of his Epiſtles, wiſhes *grace and peace* to the Romans or the Corinthians, it is as if he ſaid, "As a fruit of the free, undeſerved love and favour of God, may you enjoy all bleſſings, ſpiritual and temporal, all the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

3. Hence we may eaſily learn, in how wide a ſenſe, the term *Peace-makers* is to be underſtood.

In

In its literal meaning it implies, Thoſe lovers of God and man, who utterly deteſt and abhor all ſtrife and debate, all variance and contention: and accordingly labour with all their might, either to prevent this fire of hell from being kindled, or when it is kindled, from breaking out, or when it is broke out, from ſpreading any farther. They endeavour to calm the ſtormy ſpirits of men, to quiet their turbulent paſſions, to ſoften the minds of contending parties, and, if poſſible, reconcile them to each other. They uſe all innocent arts, and employ all their ſtrength, all the talents which God has given them, as well to preſerve peace, where it is, as to reſtore it, where it is not. It is the joy of their heart, to promote, to confirm, to increaſe mutual good-will among men: but more eſpecially among the children of God, however diſtinguiſhed by things of ſmaller importance: that as they have all *one Lord, one faith;* as they *are* all *called in one hope of their calling*, ſo they may all "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called: with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the ſpirit, in the bond of peace."

4. But in the full extent of the word, a *peacemaker* is one, that as he hath opportunity, *doth good unto all men:* one that being filled with the love of God and all mankind, cannot confine the expreſſions of it to his own family, or friends, or acquaintance, or party: or to thoſe of his own opinions; no, nor thoſe who are partakers of like precious faith: but ſteps over all theſe narrow bounds, that he may do good to every man; that he may ſome way or other manifeſt his love to neighbours and ſtrangers, friends and enemies.

He

He doth good to them all, as he hath opportunity, that is, on every poſſible occaſion; *redeeming the time*, in order thereto, *buying up every opportunity*, improving every hour, loſing no moment wherein he may profit another. He does good, not of one particular kind, but good in general: in every poſſible way, employing herein all his talents of every kind; all his power and faculties of body and ſoul, all his fortune, his intereſt, his reputation; deſiring only, that when his Lord cometh he may ſay, "Well done, good and faithful ſervant!"

5. He doth good to the uttermoſt of his power, even to the bodies of all men. He rejoices to *deal his bread to the hungry*, and to *cover the naked with a garment*. Is any a ſtranger? He takes him in, and relieves him according to his neceſſities. Are any ſick or in priſon? He viſits them, and adminiſters ſuch help as they ſtand moſt in need of. And all this he does, not as unto man; but remembering him that he hath ſaid, "Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

6. How much more does he rejoice, if he can do any good to the ſoul of any man! This power indeed belongeth unto God. It is he only that changes the heart, without which every other change is lighter than vanity. Nevertheleſs it pleaſes him who worketh all in all, to help man chiefly by man; to convey his own power and bleſſing and love, through one man to another. Therefore, although it be certain, That *the help which is done upon earth, God doth it himſelf*, yet has no man need, on this account, to ſtand idle in his vineyard. The *peace maker* cannot: he is ever labouring therein, and as an inſtrument in God's hand,

hand, preparing the ground for his Maſter's uſe, or ſowing the ſeed of the kingdom, or watering what is already ſown, if haply God may give the increaſe. According to the meaſure of grace which he has received, he uſes all diligence, either to reprove the groſs ſinner, to reclaim thoſe who run on headlong in the broad way of deſtruction; or *to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs*, and are ready to *periſh for lack of knowledge*; or to *ſupport the weak*, to *lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees*; or to bring back and heal that which was *lame* and *turned out of the way*. Nor is he leſs zealous to confirm thoſe who are already ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate; to ſtrengthen thoſe that ſtand, that they may *run with patience the race which is ſet before them*; to *build up in* their *moſt holy faith*, thoſe that know in whom they have believed: to exhort them to ſtir up the gift of God which is in them, that daily growing in grace, an entrance my be miniſtered unto them abundantly, into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt."

7. Bleſſed are they who are thus continually employed, in the work of faith and the labour of love. *For they ſhall be called*, that is, *ſhall be* (a common Hebraiſm) *the children of God*. God ſhall continue unto them the ſpirit of adoption, yea, ſhall pour it more abundantly into their hearts. He ſhall bleſs them with all the bleſſings of his children. He ſhall acknowledge them as ſons before angels and men; "and if ſons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt."

III. 1. One would imagine ſuch a perſon as has been above deſcribed, ſo full of genuine humility, ſo unaffectedly ſerious, ſo mild and gentle, ſo

ſo free from all ſelfiſh deſign, ſo devoted to God, and ſuch an active lover of men, ſhould be the darling of mankind. But our Lord was better acquainted with human nature, in its preſent ſtate. He therefore cloſes the character of this man of God, with ſhewing him the treatment he is to expect in the world. "Bleſſed, ſaith he, are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

2. In order to underſtand this thoroughly, let us, firſt enquire, Who are they that are perſecuted. And this we may eaſily learn from St. Paul: * "As of old, he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit, even ſo it is now." † "Yea, ſaith the Apoſtle, and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution." The ſame we are taught by St. John. ‖ "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren." As if he had ſaid, The Brethren, the Chriſtians cannot be loved, but by them who have paſſed from death unto life. And moſt expreſsly, by our Lord: § "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but becauſe ye are not of the world—therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his Lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you."

By all theſe ſcriptures it manifeſtly appears, Who they are that are perſecuted: namely, The righteous. "He that is born of the ſpirit; all that

* Gal. iv. 29. † 2 Tim. iii. 12. ‖ 1 John iii. 13
§ John xv. 18, &c.

that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus:" they that are *paſſed from death unto life*; thoſe who *are not of the world*: all thoſe who are meek and lowly in heart, that mourn for God, that hunger after his likeneſs; all that love God and their neighbour, and therefore, as they have opportunity, do good unto all men.

3. If it be, ſecondly, enquired, Why they are perſecuted? The anſwer is equally plain and obvious. It is *for righteouſneſs ſake*; becauſe they are righteous; becauſe they are *born after the ſpirit*; becauſe they *will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus*; becauſe they *are not of the world*. Whatever may be pretended, this is the real cauſe: be their infirmities more or leſs, ſtill, if it were not for this, they would be borne with, and the world would love its own. They are perſecuted, becauſe they are *poor in ſpirit*, that is, ſay the world, "Poor-ſpirited, mean, daſtardly ſouls, good for nothing, not fit to live in the world:" becauſe they *mourn*; "They are ſuch dull, heavy, lumpiſh creatures, enough to ſink any one's ſpirits that ſees them! They are mere death-heads; they kill innocent mirth, and ſpoil company wherever they come:" becauſe they are *meek*: "Tame, paſſive fools, juſt fit to be trampled upon:" becauſe they *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*; "a parcel of hot-brained enthuſiaſts, gaping after they know not what, not content with rational Religion, but running mad after raptures and inward feelings:" becauſe they are *merciful*, lovers of all, lovers of the evil and unthankful: "Encouraging all manner of wickedneſs; nay, tempting people to do miſchief by impunity: and men who, it is to be feared, have their own Religion ſtill to ſeek; very looſe in their principles:" becauſe they are *pure in heart*: "Uncharitable creatures! That damn all the

world, but thoſe that are of their own ſort! Blaſphemous wretches, that pretend to make God a liar, to live without ſin!" Above all, becauſe they are *peace-makers*, becauſe they take all opportunities of doing good to all men. This is the grand reaſon why they have been perſecuted in all ages, and will be till the reſtitution of all things.

"If they would but keep their Religion to themſelves, it would be tolerable. But it is this ſpreading their errors, this infecting ſo many others, which is not to be endured. They do ſo much miſchief in the world, that they ought to be tolerated no longer. It is true, the men do ſome things well enough; they relieve ſome of the poor. But this too, is only done to gain the more to their party; and ſo, in effect, to do the more miſchief." Thus the men of the world ſincerely think and ſpeak. And the more the kingdom of God prevails, the more the peace-makers are enabled to propagate lowlineſs, meekneſs and all other divine tempers; the more miſchief is done, in their account. Conſequently, the more are they enraged againſt the authors of this, and the more vehemently will they perſecute them.

4. Let us, thirdly, enquire, Who are they that perſecute them? St. Paul anſwers, "He that is born after the fleſh;" every one who is not *born of the ſpirit*, or at leaſt, deſirous ſo to be: all that do not, at leaſt, labour to *live godly in Chriſt Jeſus:* all that are not *paſſed from death unto life*, and conſequently cannot *love the brethren: the world;* that is, according to our Saviour's account, "They who know not him that ſent me:" they who know not God, even the

loving, pardoning God, by the teaching of his own Spirit.

The reaſon is plain. The ſpirit which is in the world is directly oppoſite to the ſpirit which is of God. It muſt therefore needs be, that thoſe who are of the world will be oppoſite to thoſe who are of God. There is the utmoſt contrariety between them, in all their opinions, their deſires, deſigns and tempers. And hitherto *the leopard and the kid*, cannot *lie down* in peace *together*. The proud, becauſe he is proud, cannot but perſecute the lowly; the light and airy, thoſe that mourn; and ſo in every other kind; the unlikeneſs of diſpoſition, (were there no other) being a perpetual ground of enmity. Therefore (were it only on this account) all the ſervants of the devil, will perſecute the children of God.

5. Should it be enquired, fourthly, How they will perſecute them? It may be anſwered in general, Juſt in that manner and meaſure which the wiſe Diſpoſer of all, ſees will be moſt for his glory; will tend moſt to his children's growth in grace, and the enlargement of his own kingdom. There is no one branch of God's government of the world, which is more to be admired than this. His ear is never heavy to the threatenings of the perſecutor, or the cry of the perſecuted. His eye is ever open, and his hand ſtretched out, to direct every, the minuteſt circumſtance. When the ſtorm ſhall begin, how high it ſhall riſe, which way it ſhall point its courſe, when and how it ſhall end, are all determined by his unerring wiſdom. The ungodly are only a ſword of his: an inſtrument which he uſes, as it pleaſeth him, and which itſelf, when the

the gracious ends of his Providence are answered, is cast into the fire.

At some rare times, as when Christianity was planted first, and while it was taking root in the earth; as also when the pure doctrine of Christ began to be planted again in our nation: God permitted the storm to rise high, and his children were called to resist unto blood. There was a peculiar reason why he suffered this with regard to the Apostles, That their evidence might be the more unexceptionable. But from the annals of the Church, we learn another, and a far different reason, why he suffered the heavy persecutions which arose in the second and third centuries: namely, because the mystery of iniquity did so strongly work, because of the monstrous corruptions which even then reigned in the Church: these God chastised, and at the same time strove to heal, by those severe but necessary visitations.

Perhaps the same observation may be made, with regard to the grand persecution in our own land. God had dealt very graciously with our nation; he had poured out various blessings upon us. He had given us peace abroad and at home; and a king wise and good, beyond his years. And above all, he had caused the pure light of his gospel to arise and shine amongst us. But what return did he find? *He looked for righteousness: But behold a cry!* A cry of oppression and wrong, of ambition and injustice, of malice and fraud and covetousness. Yea, the cry of those who even then expired in the flames, entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth. It was then God arose to maintain his own cause, against those that held the truth in unrighteousness.

Then he fold them into the hands of their perfecutors, by a judgment mixt with mercy: an affliction to punifh, and yet a medicine to heal the grievous backflidings of his people.

6. But it is feldom that God fuffers the ftorm to rife fo high, as torture, or death, or bonds, or imprifonment. Whereas his children are frequently called to endure thofe lighter kinds of perfecution; they frequently fuffer the eftrangement of kinsfolks; the lofs of the friends that were as their own foul. They find the truth of their Lord's word (concerning the event, though not the defign of his coming) * "Suppofe ye that I am come to give peace upon earth? I tell you nay; but rather divifion." And hence will naturally follow lofs of bufinefs or employment, and confequently of fubftance. But all thefe circumftances likewife are under the wife direction of God, who allots to every one what is moft expedient for him.

7. But the perfecution which attends all the children of God, is that our Lord defcribes in the following words. "Blefled are ye when men fhall revile you, and perfecute you, (fhall perfecute by reviling you) and fay all manner of evil againft you, falfely, for my fake." This cannot fail: it is the very badge of our difcipleftip: it is one of the feals of our calling. It is a fure portion, entailed on all the children of God: if we have it not, we are baftards and not fons. Straight through *evil report*, as well as *good report*, lies the only way to the kingdom. The meek, ferious, humble, zealous lovers of God and man, are of good report among their Brethren; but of evil report with the world, who count

* Luke xii. 51.

count and treat them "as the filth and off-scouring of all things."

8. Indeed some have supposed, that before the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, the scandal of the cross will cease: that God will cause Christians to be esteemed and loved even by those who are as yet in their sins. Yea, and sure it is, that even now, he at some time suspends the contempt as well as the fierceness of men: *he makes a man's enemies be at peace with him* for a season, and gives him favour with his bitterest persecutors. But setting aside this exempt case, *the scandal of the cross is* not yet *ceased:* but a man may say still, "If I please men, I am not the servant of Christ: let no man therefore regard that pleasing suggestion (pleasing doubtless to flesh and blood) "That bad men only *pretend* to hate and despise them that are good, but do indeed love and esteem them in their hearts." Not so: they may employ them sometimes; but it is for their own profit. They may put confidence in them; for they know their ways are not like other mens'. But still they love them not; unless so far as the Spirit of God may be striving with them. Our Saviour's words are express: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Yea, (setting aside what exceptions may be made by the preventing grace or the peculiar Providence of God) it hateth them as cordially and sincerely, as ever it did their Master.

9. It remains only to enquire, How are the Children of God to behave, with regard to persecution? And first, They ought, not knowingly or designedly, to bring it upon themselves. This

is contrary both to the example and advice of our Lord and all his Apoſtles; who teach us not only not to ſeek, but to avoid it, as far as we can, without injuring our conſcience; without giving up any part of that righteouſneſs, which we are to prefer before life itſelf. So our Lord expreſsly ſaith, "When they perſecute you in this city, flee ye into another," which is indeed, when it can be taken, the moſt unexceptionable way of avoiding perſecution.

10. Yet think not, that you can always avoid it, either by this, or any other means. If ever that idle imagination ſteals into your heart, put it to flight by that earneſt caution, "Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his Lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you. Be ye wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves." But will this ſcreen you from perſecution? Not unleſs you have more wiſdom than your Maſter, or more innocence than the Lamb of God.

Neither deſire to avoid it, to eſcape it wholly; for if you do, you are none of his. If you eſcape the perſecution, you eſcape the bleſſing; the bleſſing of thoſe who are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake. If you are not perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. "If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him. But if we deny him, he will alſo deny us."

11. Nay, rather, *rejoice and be exceeding glad*, when men perſecute you for his ſake: when *they perſecute* you by *reviling* you, and by *ſaying all manner of evil againſt you falſely*; (which they will not fail to mix with every kind of perſecution; they muſt blacken you to excuſe themſelves.)

"For

"For so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you," those who were most eminently holy in heart and life; yea, and all the righteous which ever have been from the beginning of the world. Rejoice, because by this mark also, ye know unto whom ye belong. And because *great is your reward in heaven:*" the reward purchased by the blood of the Covenant, and freely bestowed in proportion to your sufferings, as well as holiness of heart and life. "Be exceeding glad; knowing that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

12. Mean time, let no persecution turn you out of the way, of lowliness and meekness, of love and benificence. * "Ye have heard indeed that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." And your miserable teachers have hence allowed you to avenge yourselves, to return evil for evil.

But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil—Not thus; not by returning it in kind. "But (rather than do this) whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

So invincible let thy meekness be. And be thy love suitable thereto. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Only, give not away that which is another man's, that which is not thine own. Therefore, 1. Take care to owe no man any

* Ver. 38, &c.

any thing. For what thou oweſt, is not thy own, but another man's. 2. Provide for thoſe of thine own houſehold. This alſo God hath required of thee: and what is neceſſary to ſuſtain them in life and godlineſs, is alſo not thine own. Then, 3. Give or lend all that remains from day to day, or from year to year. Only firſt, ſeeing thou canſt not give or lend to all, remember the houſehold of faith.

13. The meekneſs and love we are to feel, the kindneſs we are to ſhew to them that perſecute us for righteouſneſs ſake, our bleſſed Lord deſcribes farther in the following verſes. O that they were engraven upon our hearts!

* "Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy." (God indeed had ſaid only the former part, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour." The children of the devil had added the latter, "And hate thy enemy.)" *But I ſay unto you*, 1. *Love your enemies.* See that you bear a tender goodwill, to thoſe who are moſt bitter againſt you, who wiſh you all manner of evil. 2. *Bleſs them that curſe you.* Are there any whoſe bitterneſs of ſpirit breaks forth in bitter words? Who are continually curſing and reproaching you when you are preſent, and *ſaying all evil againſt you* when abſent? So much the rather do you bleſs. In converſing with them, uſe all mildneſs and ſoftneſs of language. Reprove them, by repeating a better leſſon before them, by ſhewing them how they ought to have ſpoken. And in ſpeaking of them, ſay all the good you can, without violating the rules of truth and juſtice. 3. *Do good to them that hate you.* Let your actions ſhew, that

* Ver. 43, &c.

that you are as real in love as they in hatred. Return good for evil. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." 4. If you can do nothing more, at leaſt "pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you." You can never be diſabled from doing this; nor can all their malice or violence hinder you. Pour out your ſouls to God, not only for thoſe, who did this once, but now repent. This is a little thing. * "If thy brother, ſeven times a day, turn, and ſay unto thee, I repent;" that is, if after ſo many relapſes, he gives thee reaſon to believe, that he is really and thoroughly changed, *then thou ſhalt forgive him*, ſo as to truſt him, to put him in thy boſom, as if he had never ſinned againſt thee at all. But pray for, wreſtle with God, for thoſe that do not repent, that now deſpitefully uſe thee and perſecute thee. Thus far forgive them, "† not until ſeven times only, but until ſeventy times ſeven." Whether they repent or no, yea though they appear farther and farther from it, yet ſhew them this inſtance of kindneſs: *that ye may be the children*, that ye may approve yourſelves the genuine children *of your Father which is in heaven*, who ſhews his goodneſs by giving ſuch bleſſings as they are capable of, even to his ſtubborneſt enemies; "who maketh the ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. ‖ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the Publicans the ſame?" Who pretend to no Religion; whom ye yourſelves acknowledge to be without God in the world. § *And if ye ſalute*, ſhew kindneſs in word or deed, to *your brethren*, your friends or kinsfolk

* Luke xvii. 3. † Matt. xviii. 22 ‖ Ver. 47. § Ver. 48.

folk *only: what do ye more than others?* Than thoſe who have no Religion at all? *Do not even the Publicans ſo?* Nay, but follow ye a better pattern than them. In patience, in long-ſuffering, in mercy, in beneficence of every kind, to all, even to your bittereſt perſecutors: * "Be ye, Chriſtians, perfect (in kind, though not in degree) even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

III. Behold Chriſtianity in its native form! as delivered by its great Author! This is the genuine Religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Such he preſents to him whoſe eyes are opened. See a picture of God, ſo far as he is imitable by man! A picture drawn by God's own hand! "Behold, ye deſpiſers and wonder and periſh!" Or rather, wonder and adore! Rather cry out, Is this the Religion of Jeſus of Nazareth? The Religion which I perſecuted! Let me no more be found even to fight againſt God. Lord what wouldſt thou have me to do?—What beauty appears in the whole! How juſt a ſymmetry! What exact proportion is every part! How deſirable is the happineſs here deſcribed? How venerable, how lovely the holineſs?—This is the ſpirit of Religion: the quinteſſence of it. Theſe are indeed the fundamentals of Chriſtianity. O that we may not be hearers of it only! Like a man beholding his own face in a glaſs, who goeth his way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Nay, but let us ſteadily "look into this perfect law of liberty, and continue therein." Let us not reſt until every line thereof

* Ver. 48.

of is tranſcribed into our own hearts. Let us watch and pray, and believe and love, and *ſtrive for the maſtery*, till every part of it ſhall appear in our ſoul graven there by the finger of God: till we are "holy as he which hath called us is holy, perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect!"

SERMON

SERMON XXIII.

DISCOURSE the FOURTH, on our LORD'S SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW V. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel; but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1. THE beauty or Holiness, of that inward man of the heart, which is renewed after the image of God, cannot but strike every eye which God hath opened, every enlightened understanding. The ornament of a meek, humble, loving spirit, will at least excite the approbation of

of all thoſe who are capable in any degree of diſcerning ſpiritual good and evil. From the hour men begin to emerge out of the darkneſs which covers the giddy, unthinking world, they cannot but perceive how deſirable a thing it is to be thus transformed into the likeneſs of him that created us. This inward Religion bears the ſhape of God, ſo viſibly impreſt upon it, that a ſoul muſt be wholly immerſed in fleſh and blood, when he can doubt of its divine original. We may ſay of this in a ſecondary ſenſe, even as of the Son of God himſelf, That it is the *brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*: ἀπαυγασμα τῆς δόξης ἀυτῦ· *The beaming forth of his* eternal *glory*; and yet ſo tempered and ſoftened, that even the children of men, herein ſee God and live: χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως ἀυτῦ· "*The character, the ſtamp, the living impreſſion, of his perſon,*" who is the fountain of beauty and love, the original ſource of all excellency and perfection.

2. If Religion therefore were carried no farther than this, they could have no doubt concerning it: they ſhould have no objection againſt purſuing it with the whole ardor of their ſouls. But why, ſay they, is it clogged with other things? What need of loading it with *doing* and *ſuffering*? Theſe are what damps the vigour of the ſoul, and ſinks it down to earth again. Is it not enough to *follow after Charity*? To ſoar upon the wings of Love? Will it not ſuffice, to worſhip God who is a Spirit, with the ſpirit of our minds, without encumbering ourſelves with outward things, or even thinking of them at all? Is it not better that the whole extent of our thought ſhould be taken up with high and heavenly con-

 templation?

temptation? And that inſtead of buſying ourſelves at all about externals, we ſhould only commune with God in our hearts.

3. Many eminent men have ſpoken thus: have adviſed us "To ceaſe from all outward action;" wholly to withdraw from the world; to leave the body behind us; to abſtract ourſelves from all ſenſible things: to have no concern at all about outward Religion, but to "work all virtues in the will, as the far more excellent way, more perfective of the ſoul, as well as more acceptable to God.

4. It needed not that any ſhould tell our Lord, of this maſter-piece of the wiſdom from beneath! This faireſt of all the devices wherewith Satan hath ever perverted the right ways of the Lord. And, O! what inſtruments hath he found from time to time, to employ in this his ſervice! To wield this grand engine of hell, againſt ſome of the moſt important truths of God! Men that "would deceive if it were poſſible the very Elect;" the men of faith and love: yea, that have for a ſeaſon deceived and led away no inconſiderable number of them; who have fallen in all ages into the gilded ſnare, and hardly eſcaped with the ſkin of their teeth.

5. But has our Lord been wanting on his part? Has he not ſufficiently guarded us againſt this pleaſing deluſion? Has he not armed us here with armour of proof againſt Satan *transformed into an angel of light?* Yea, verily: he here defends, in the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt manner, the active, patient religion he had juſt deſcribed: what can be fuller and plainer than the words he immediately ſubjoins, to what he had ſaid of doing and ſuffering? "Ye are the ſalt of

of the earth. But if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, wherewithal ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be caſt out, and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world: a city that is ſet on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a buſhel; but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light to all that are in the houſe. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In order fully to explain and enforce theſe important words, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, Firſt, that Chriſtianity is eſſentially a ſocial Religion, and that to turn it into a ſolitary one, is to deſtroy it: Secondly, that to conceal this Religion is impoſſible, as well as utterly contrary to the deſign of its Author. I ſhall, Thirdly, anſwer ſome objections: and conclude the whole with a practical application.

I. 1. Firſt. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that Chriſtianity is eſſentially a ſocial Religion; and that to turn it into a ſolitary Religion, is indeed to deſtroy it.

By Chriſtianity I mean, that method of worſhipping God, which is here revealed to man by Jeſus Chriſt. When I ſay this is eſſentially a ſocial Religion, I mean not only, that it cannot ſubſiſt ſo well, but that it cannot ſubſiſt at all without ſociety, without living and converſing with other men. And in ſhewing this, I ſhall confine myſelf to thoſe conſiderations, which will ariſe from the very diſcourſe before us. But if this be ſhewn, then doubtleſs to turn this Religion into a ſolitary one, is to deſtroy it.

Not that we can in any wife condemn, the intermixing ſolitude or retirement with Society. This is not only allowable, but expedient: nay, it is neceſſary as daily experience ſhews, for every one that either already is, or deſires to be a real Chriſtian. It can hardly be that we ſhould ſpend one entire day, in a continued intercourſe with men, without ſuffering loſs in our ſoul, and in ſome meaſure grieving the holy Spirit of God. We have need daily to retire from the world, at leaſt, morning and evening, to converſe with God, to commune more freely with our Father which is in ſecret. Nor indeed can a man of experience condemn, even longer ſeaſons of religious retirement, ſo they do not imply any neglect of the worldly employ, wherein the providence of God hath placed us.

2. Yet ſuch retirement muſt not ſwallow up all our time; this would be to deſtroy, not advance true Religion. For, that the Religion deſcribed by our Lord in the foregoing words, cannot ſubſiſt without ſociety, without our living and converſing with other men, is manifeſt from hence, that ſeveral of the moſt eſſential branches thereof, can have no place, if we have no intercourſe with the world.

3. There is no diſpoſition (for inſtance) which is more eſſential to Chriſtianity than meekneſs. Now although this, as it implies reſignation to God, or patience in pain or ſickneſs, may ſubſiſt in a deſert, in a hermit's cell, in total ſolitude; yet as it implies (which it no leſs neceſſarily does) mildneſs, gentleneſs, and long-ſuffering, it cannot poſſibly have a being, it has no place under heaven, without an intercourſe with other men. So that

to

to attempt turning this into a ſolitary virtue, is to deſtroy it from the face of the earth.

4. Another neceſſary branch of true Chriſtianity, is peace-making, or doing of good. That this is equally eſſential with any of the other parts of the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, there can be no ſtronger argument to evince (and therefore it would be abſurd to alledge any other) than that it is here inſerted in the original plan he has laid down, of the fundamentals of his religion. Therefore to ſet aſide this, is the ſame daring inſult on the authority of our great Maſter, as to ſet aſide mercifulneſs, purity of heart, or any other branch of his inſtitution. But this is apparently ſet aſide, by all who call us to the wilderneſs; who recommend entire ſolitude either to the babes, or the young men, or the Fathers in Chriſt. For will any man affirm, that a ſolitary Chriſtian (ſo called, though it is little leſs than a contradiction in terms) can be a merciful man? That is, one that takes every opportunity of doing all good to all men? What can be more plain, than that this fundamental branch of the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without ſociety, without our living and converſing with other men?

5. But is it not expedient however (one might naturally aſk) to converſe only with good men? only with thoſe whom we know to be meek and merciful; holy of heart and holy of life? Is it not expedient to refrain from any converſation or intercourſe, with men of the oppoſite character? Men who do not obey, perhaps do not believe the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? The advice of St. Paul to the Chriſtians at Corinth, may

ſeem to favour this." "* I wrote unto you in an Epiſtle, not to company with fornicators." And it is certainly not adviſeable ſo to company with them, or with any of the workers of iniquity, as to have any particular familiarity, or any ſtrictneſs of friendſhip with them. To contract or continue in an intimacy with any ſuch, is no way expedient for a Chriſtian. It muſt neceſſarily expoſe him to abundance of dangers and ſnares, out of which he can have no reaſonable hope of deliverance.

But the Apoſtle does not forbid us, to have any intercourſe at all, even with the men that know not God. For then, ſays he, *ye muſt needs go out of the world*, which he could never adviſe them to do. But he ſubjoins, † *If any man that is called a brother*, that profeſſes himſelf a Chriſtian, *be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner:* "Now I have written unto you not to keep company with him; with ſuch an one, no not to eat." This muſt neceſſarily imply, that we break off all familiarity, all intimacy of acquaintance with them. § *Yet count him not*, ſaith the Apoſtle elſewhere, *as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a brother:* plainly ſhewing that even in ſuch a caſe as this, we are not to renounce all fellowſhip with him: ſo that here is no advice to ſeparate wholly, even from wicked men. Yea, theſe very words teach us quite the contrary.

6. Much more the words of our Lord: who is ſo far from directing us, to break of all commerce with the world, that without it, according to his account of Chriſtianity, we cannot be Chriſtians at all. It would be eaſy to ſhew, that ſome

* 1 Cor. v. 9. † Ver. 11. § 2 Theſſ. iii. 15.

ſome intercourſe even with ungodly and unholy men, is abſolutely needful in order to the full exertion of every temper, which he has deſcribed as the way to the kingdom: that it is indiſpenſibly neceſſary in order to the compleat exerciſe of poverty of ſpirit, of mourning, and of every other diſpoſition which has a place here, in the genuine Religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Yea, it is neceſſary to the very being of ſeveral of them; of that meekneſs, for example, which inſtead of demanding *an eye for an eye, or a tooth, for a tooth*, doth *not reſiſt evil*; but cauſes us rather, when ſmitten *on the right cheek, to turn the other alſo*: of that mercifulneſs, whereby we "love our enemies, bleſs them that curſe us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us:" and of that complication of love and all holy tempers, which is exerciſed in ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake. Now all theſe, it is clear, could have no being, were to have no commerce with any but real Chriſtians.

7. Indeed were we wholly to ſeparate ourſelves from ſinners, how could we poſſibly anſwer that character which our Lord gives us in theſe very words; "Ye (Chriſtians, ye that are lowly, ſerious and meek; ye that hunger after righteouſneſs, that love God and man, that do good to all, and therefore ſuffer evil; ye) are the ſalt of the earth." It is your very nature to ſeaſon whatever is round about you. It is the nature of the divine ſavour which is in you, to ſpread whatſoever ye touch: to diffuſe itſelf on every ſide, to all thoſe among whom you are. This is the great reaſon why the Providence of God has ſo mingled you together with other men, that whatever

whatever grace you have received of God may through you be communicated to others; that every holy temper, and word, and work of yours, may have an influence on them alſo. By this means a check will in ſome meaſure be given, to the corruption which is in the world; and a ſmall part at leaſt, ſaved from the general infection, and rendered holy and pure before God.

8. That we may the more diligently labour to ſeaſon all we can, with every holy and heavenly temper, our Lord proceeds to ſhew the deſperate ſtate of thoſe, who do not impart the Religion they have received, which indeed they cannot poſſibly fail to do, ſo long as it remains in their own hearts. "If the ſalt hath loſt its ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be caſt out, and trodden under foot of men." If ye who were holy and heavenly-minded, and conſequently zealous of good works, have no longer that ſavour in yourſelves, and do therefore no longer ſeaſon others; if you are grown flat, inſipid, dead, both careleſs of your own ſoul, and uſeleſs to the ſouls of other men, *wherewith ſhall* ye *be ſalted?* How ſhall ye be recovered? What help? What hope? Can taſteleſs ſalt be reſtored to its ſavour! No; *it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be caſt out*, even as the mire in the ſtreets, *and to be trodden under foot of men*, to be overwhelmed with everlaſting contempt. If ye had never known the Lord, there might have been hope, if ye had never been *found in him*. But what can you now ſay to that ſolemn declaration, juſt parallel to what he hath here ſpoken? * "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he (the Father) taketh away. He that abideth in me, and I in

* John xv. 2, 5, 6.

I in him, bringeth forth much fruit.—If a man abide not in me, (or, do not bring forth fruit) he is caſt out as a branch and withered; and men gather them (not to plant them again, but) to caſt them into the fire."

9. Toward thoſe who have never taſted of the good word, God is indeed pitiful and of tender mercy. But juſtice takes place with regard to thoſe who have taſted that the Lord is gracious, and have afterwards "turned back from the holy commandment then delivered to them." † "For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened," in whoſe hearts God had once ſhined, to enlighten them with the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt;" "who have taſted of the heavenly gift," of redemption in his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins; "and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt," of lowlineſs, of meekneſs, and of the love of God and man ſhed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt which was given unto them: "and have fallen away." *και παραπεσόντας.* (Here is not a ſuppoſition, but a flat declaration of matter of fact) "to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame."

But that none may miſunderſtand theſe awful words, it ſhould be carefully obſerved, 1. Who they are that are here ſpoken of; namely, they, and they only, who *were once* thus *enlightened.* They only *who did taſte of* that *heavenly gift, and were* thus *made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt.* So that all who have not experienced theſe things, are wholly unconcerned in this Scripture. 2. What that falling away is, which is here ſpoken of. It is

† Heb. vi. 4, &c.

is an abſolute, total apoſtacy. A believer may fall, and not fall away. He may fall and riſe again. And if he ſhould fall, even into ſin, yet this caſe, dreadful as it is, is not deſperate. For "we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins." But let him above all things beware, leſt his "heart be hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin:" leſt he ſhould ſink lower and lower, till he wholly fall away, till he become as *ſalt* that hath *loſt its ſavour: for if we* thus *ſin wilfully, after we have received the* experimental "knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins: but a certain, fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries."

II. 1. "But although we may not wholly ſeparate ourſelves from mankind, although it be granted, we ought to ſeaſon them, with the Religion which God has wrought in our hearts, yet may not this be done inſenſibly? May we not convey this into others in a ſecret, and almoſt imperceptible manner? So that ſcarce any one ſhall be able to obſerve, how or when it is done? Even as ſalt conveys its own ſavour, into that which is ſeaſoned thereby, without any noiſe, and without being liable to any outward obſervation. And if ſo, although we do not go out of the world, yet we may lie hid in it. We may thus far keep our Religion to ourſelves, and not offend thoſe whom we cannot help."

2. Of this plauſible reaſoning of fleſh and blood, our Lord was well aware alſo. And he has given a full anſwer to it in thoſe words, which come now to be conſidered: in explaining which I ſhall

I shall endeavour to shew, as I proposed to do in the second place, That so long as true Religion abides in our hearts, it is impossible to conceal it, as well as absolutely contrary to the design of its great Author.

And, first, it is impossible for any that have it, to conceal the Religion of Jesus Christ. This our Lord makes plain beyond all contradiction, by a two-fold comparison. "Ye are the light of the world. A city set upon an hill cannot be hid."

Ye Christians *are the light of the world*, with regard both to your tempers and actions. Your holiness makes you as conspicuous as the sun in the midst of heaven. As ye cannot go out of the world, so neither can ye stay in it, without appearing to all mankind. Ye may not flee from men, and while ye are among them, it is impossible to hide your lowliness and meekness, and those other dispositions whereby ye aspire to be perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Love cannot be hid any more than light; and least of all, when it shines forth in action; when ye exercise yourselves in the labour of love, in beneficence of every kind. As well may men think to hide a city, as to hide a Christian: yea, as well may they conceal a city set upon an hill, as an holy, zealous, active lover of God and man.

3. It is true, men who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, will take all possible pains to prove, That the light which is in you is darkness. They will say evil, all manner of evil, falsely of the good which is in you: they will lay to your charge that which is farthest from your thoughts, which is the very reverse

reverſe of all you are and all you do. And your patient continuance in well-doing, your meek ſuffering all things for the Lord's ſake, your calm, humble joy in the midſt of perſecution, your unwearied labour to overcome evil with good, will make you ſtill more viſible and conſpicuous than ye were before.

4. So impoſſible it is, to keep our Religion from being ſeen, unleſs we caſt it away; ſo vain is the thought, of hiding the light, unleſs by putting it out. Sure it is, that a ſecret, unobſerved Religion cannot be the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Whatever Religion can be concealed, is not Chriſtianity. If a Chriſtian could be hid, he could not be compared to a city ſet upon an hill; to the light of the world, the ſun ſhining from heaven, and ſeen by all the world below. Never therefore let it enter into the heart of him whom God hath renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, to hide that light, to keep his Religion to himſelf; eſpecially conſidering it is not only impoſſible, to conceal true Chriſtianity, but likewiſe abſolutely contrary to the deſign of the great Author of it.

5. This plainly appears from the following words: "Neither do men light a candle to put it under a buſhel." As if he had ſaid, As men do not light a candle, only to cover and conceal it, ſo neither does God enlighten any ſoul with his glorious knowledge and love, to have it covered and concealed, either by prudence, falſely ſo called, or ſhame, or voluntary humility: to have it hid either in a deſert, or in the world; either by avoiding men, or in converſing with them. "But they put it on a candleſtick, and it giveth light to all that are in the houſe." In

like manner, it is the design of God, that every Christian should be in an open point of view: that he may give light to all around, that he may visibly express the Religion of Jesus Christ.

6. Thus hath God in all ages spoken to the world, not only by precept but by example also. He hath *not left himself without witness* in any nation where the sound of the gospel had gone forth, without a few who testified his truth, by their lives as well as their words. These have been "as lights shining in a dark place." And from time to time they have been the means of enlightening some, of preserving a remnant, a little seed which was "counted unto the Lord for a generation." They have led a few poor sheep out of the darkness of the world, and guided their feet into the way of peace.

7. One might imagine, that where both Scripture and the reason of things speak so clearly and expressly, there could not be much advanced on the other side, at least, not with any appearance of truth. But they who imagine thus, know little of the depths of Satan. After all that Scripture and reason have said, so exceeding plausible are the pretences for solitary Religion, for a Christian's going out of the world, or at least hiding himself in it, that we need all the wisdom of God to see through the snare, and all the power of God to escape it: so many and strong are the objections which have been brought, against being social, open, active Christians.

III. 1. To answer these was the third thing which I proposed. And, first, it has been often objected, That Religion does not lie in outward things, but in the heart, the inmost soul:

that it is the union of the ſoul with God, the life of God in the ſoul of man: that outſide Religion is nothing worth; ſeeing God "delighteth not in burnt-offerings, in outward ſervices, but a pure and holy heart is the "ſacrifice he will not deſpiſe."

I anſwer, it is moſt true, That the root of Religion lies in the heart, in the inmoſt ſoul: that this is the union of the ſoul with God; the life of God in the ſoul of man. But if this root be really in the heart, it cannot but put forth branches. And theſe are, the ſeveral inſtances of outward obedience, which partake of the ſame nature with the root; and conſequently, are not only marks or ſigns, but ſubſtantial parts of Religion.

It is alſo true, That bare outſide Religion, which has no root in the heart, is nothing worth; that God delighteth not in *ſuch* outward ſervices, no more than in Jewiſh burnt-offerings, and that a pure and holy heart is a ſacrifice, with which he is always well pleaſed. But he is alſo well pleaſed with all that outward ſervice, which ariſes from the heart: with the ſacrifice of our prayers, (whether public or private) of our praiſes and thankſgivings: with the ſacrifice of our goods, humbly devoted to him, and employed wholly to his glory: and with that of our bodies, which he peculiarly claims: which the Apoſtle *beſeeches* us, "by the mercies of God to preſent unto him, a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God."

2. A ſecond objection, nearly related to this, is, That Love is all in all: that is, "the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment," of every commandment of God: that all we do

and

and all we ſuffer, if we have not Charity or Love, profiteth us nothing; and therefore the Apoſtle directs us, "To follow after Charity," and terms this, "The more excellent way.

I anſwer, it is granted, That the love of God and man, ariſing from *faith unfeigned*, is all in all, the fulfilling of the law, the end of every commandment of God. It is true, that without this, whatever we do, whatever we ſuffer, profits us nothing. But it does not follow, That Love is all in ſuch a ſenſe, as to ſuperſede either faith or good works. It is "the fulfilling of the law," not by releaſing us from, but by conſtraining us to obey it. It is "the end of the commandment," as every commandment leads to and centers in it. It is allowed, that whatever we do or ſuffer, without Love, profits us nothing. But withal whatever we do or ſuffer in Love, though it were only the ſuffering reproach for Chriſt, or the giving a cup of cold water in his name, it ſhall in no wiſe loſe its reward.

3. "But does not the Apoſtle direct us, to *follow after Charity?* And does he not term it, *a more excellent way?*"—He does direct us to *follow after Charity.* But not after that alone. His words are, * "Follow after Charity; and deſire ſpiritual gifts." Yea, *follow after Charity;* and deſire to ſpend and be ſpent for your brethren. *Follow after Charity;* and as you have opportunity, do good to all men.

In the ſame verſe alſo, wherein he terms this, the way of Love, *a more excellent way*, he directs the Corinthians to deſire other gifts beſides it: yea, to deſire them earneſtly. † "Covet earneſtly,

* 1 Cor. xiv. 1. † 1 Cor. xii. 31.

neſtly, ſaith he, the beſt gifts: and yet I ſhew unto you a more excellent way." More excellent than what? Than the gifts of *healing*, of *ſpeaking with tongues*, and of *interpreting*, mentioned in the preceding verſe. But not more excellent than the way of Obedience. Of this the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking. Neither is he ſpeaking of outward Religion at all. So that this text is quite wide of the preſent queſtion.

But ſuppoſe the Apoſtle had been ſpeaking of outward as well as inward Religion, and comparing them together; ſuppoſe in the compariſon he had given the preference ever ſo much to the latter: ſuppoſe he had preferred (as he juſtly might) a loving heart, before all outward works whatever: yet it would not follow, that we were to reject either one or the other. No; God hath joined them together from the beginning of the world. And let no man put them aſunder.

4. "But *God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.* And is not this enough? Nay, ought we not to employ the whole ſtrength of our mind herein? Does not attending to outward things clog the ſoul, that it cannot ſoar aloft in holy contemplation? Does it not damp the vigour of our thought? Has it not a natural tendency, to encumber and diſtract the mind? Whereas St. Paul would have us *to be without carefulneſs*, and to *wait upon the Lord without diſtraction.*"

I anſwer, God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth. Yea, and this is enough: we ought to employ the whole ſtrength of our mind therein. But then I would aſk, What is it to worſhip God,

God, a ſpirit, in ſpirit and in truth? Why, it is to worſhip him with our ſpirit; to worſhip him in that manner, which none but ſpirits are capable of. It is, to believe in him, as a wiſe, juſt, holy Being, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity: and yet merciful, gracious and long-ſuffering: forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion and ſin: caſting all our ſins behind his back, and accepting us in the Beloved. It is, to love him, to delight in him, to deſire him, with all our heart, and mind, and ſoul, and ſtrength: to imitate him we love, by purifying ourſelves, even as he is pure; and to obey him whom we love and in whom we believe, both in thought, and word, and work. Conſequently, one branch of the worſhipping God in ſpirit and in truth, is the keeping his outward commandments. To glorify him therefore with our bodies as well as with our ſpirits, to go through outward work with hearts lifted up to him, to make our daily employment a ſacrifice to God; to buy and ſell, to eat and drink to his glory: this is worſhipping God in ſpirit and in truth, as much as the praying to him in a wilderneſs.

5. But if ſo, then Contemplation is only one way of worſhipping God in ſpirit and in truth. Therefore to give ourſelves up entirely to this, would be to deſtroy many branches of ſpiritual worſhip, all equally acceptable to God, and equally profitable, not hurtful, to the ſoul. For it is a great miſtake to ſuppoſe, that an attention to thoſe outward things, whereto the Providence of God hath called us, is any clog to a Chriſtian, or any hinderance at all to his always ſeeing Him that is inviſible. It does not at all damp the ardor of his thought, it does not encumber or diſ-

tract his mind; it gives him no uneasy or hurtful care, who does it all as unto the Lord, who hath learned, whatsoever he doth in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus: having only one eye of the soul, which moves round on outward things, and one immoveably fixed on God. Learn what this meaneth, ye poor recluses, that you may clearly discern your own littleness of faith. Yea, that you may no longer judge others by yourselves, go and learn what that meaneth:

Thou, O Lord, in tender love
Dost all my burdens bear;
Lift my heart to things above,
And fix it ever there.

Calm on tumult's wheel I sit:
Midst busy multitudes alone,
Sweetly waiting at thy feet,
Till all thy will be done.

6. But the grand objection is still behind. "We appeal, say they, to Experience. Our light did shine: we used outward things many years: and yet they profited nothing. We attended on all the ordinances: but we were no better for it; nor indeed any one else: nay we were the worse. For we fancied ourselves Christians for so doing, when we knew not what Christianity meant."

I allow the fact. I allow that you and ten thousand more have thus abused the ordinances of God: mistaking the means for the end: supposing that the doing these, or some other outward works, either was the Religion of Jesus Christ, or would be accepted in the place of it.

But

But let the abuſe be taken away and the uſe remain. Now uſe all outward things; but uſe them with a conſtant eye to the renewal of your ſoul in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

7. But this is not all. They affirm, "Experience likewiſe ſhews, That the trying to do good is but loſt labour: what does it avail to feed or clothe men's bodies, if they are juſt dropping into everlaſting fire? And what good can any man do to their ſouls? If theſe are changed, God doth it himſelf. Beſides, all men are either good, at leaſt deſirous ſo to be, or obſtinately evil. Now the former have no need of us. Let them aſk help of God, and it ſhall be given them. And the latter will receive no help from us. Nay, and our Lord forbids, to *caſt our perils before ſwine.*"

I anſwer, 1. Whether they will finally be loſt or ſaved, you are expreſsly commanded to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. If you can, and do not, whatever becomes of them, you ſhall go away into everlaſting fire. 2. Though it is God only changes hearts, yet he doth it generally by man. It is our part to do all that in us lies, as diligently as if we could change them ourſelves, and then to leave the event to him. 3. God in anſwer to their prayers, builds up his children by each other in every good gift; nouriſhing and ſtrengthening the whole "body, by that which every joint ſupplieth." So that "the eye cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee;" no, nor even "the head to the feet, I have no need of you." Laſtly, How are you aſſured, that the perſons before you are dogs or ſwine? Judge them not, until you have tried. "How knoweſt thou, O man, but thou mayeſt gain

gain thy brother?" But thou mayeſt, under God, ſave his ſoul from death? When he ſpurns thy love and blaſphemes the good word, then it is time to give him up to God.

8. "We have tried. We have laboured to reform ſinners. And what did it avail? On many we could make no impreſſion at all: and if ſome were changed for a while, yet their goodneſs was but as the morning dew; and they were ſoon as bad, nay worſe than ever. So that we only hurt them—and ourſelves too: for our minds were hurried and diſcompoſed: perhaps filled with anger inſtead of love. Therefore we had better have kept our Religion to ourſelves."

It is very poſſible this fact alſo may be true; that you have tried to do good and have not ſucceeded: yea, that thoſe who ſeemed reformed, relapſed into ſin, and their laſt ſtate was worſe than the firſt. And what marvel? Is the ſervant above his Maſter? But how often did he ſtrive to ſave ſinners: and they would not hear: or when they had followed him a while, they turned back as a dog to his vomit. But he did not therefore deſiſt from ſtriving to do good: no more ſhould you, whatever your ſucceſs be. It is your part, to do as you are commanded: the event is in the hand of God. You are not accountable for this: leave it to him, who orders all things well. "In the morning ſow thy ſeed, and in the evening with-hold not thy hand; for thou knoweſt not whether ſhall proſper," Eccleſ. xi. 6.

"But the trial hurries and frets your own ſoul." Perhaps it did ſo for this very reaſon, becauſe you thought you was accountable for the event, which no man is, nor indeed can be. Or perhaps,

perhaps, becauſe you were off your guard; you was not watchful over your own ſpirit. But this is no reaſon for diſobeying God. Try again; but try more warily than before. Do good (as you forgive) "not ſeven times only; but until ſeventy times ſeven." Only be wiſer by experience: attempt it every time more cautiouſly than before. Be more humble before God, more deeply convinced, that of yourſelf you can do nothing. Be more jealous over your own ſpirit: more gentle and watchful unto prayer. Thus "caſt your bread upon the waters, and you ſhall find it again after many days."

IV. 1. Notwithſtanding all theſe plauſible pretences for hiding it, "Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This is the practical application which our Lord himſelf makes of the foregoing conſiderations.

"Let your light ſo ſhine"—Your lowlineſs of heart, your gentleneſs and meekneſs of wiſdom: your ſerious, weighty concern for the things of eternity, and ſorrow for the ſins and miſeries of men: your earneſt deſire of univerſal holineſs and full happineſs in God: your tender goodwill to all mankind, and fervent love to your ſupreme Benefactor. Endeavour not to conceal this light, wherewith God hath enlightened your ſoul: but let it *ſhine before men*, before all with whom you are, in the whole tenor of your converſation. Let it ſhine ſtill more eminently in your actions, in your doing all poſſible good to all men: and in your ſuffering for righteouſneſs-ſake,

ſake, while you "rejoice and are exceeding glad, knowing that great is your reward in heaven."

2. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works: ſo far let a Chriſtian be from ever deſigning, or deſiring to conceal his Religion. On the contrary, let it be your deſire not to conceal it; not to put the *light under a buſhel*. Let it be your care, to place it "on a candleſtick, that it may give light to all that are in the houſe. Only take heed, not to ſeek your own praiſe herein, not to deſire any honour to yourſelves. But let it be your ſole aim that all, who ſee your good works, may "glorify your Father which is in heaven."

3. Be this your one ultimate end in all things. With this view, be plain, open, undiſguiſed. Let your love be without diſſimulation: why ſhould you hide fair, diſintereſted love? Let there be no guile found in your mouth: let your words be the genuine picture of your heart. Let there be no darkneſs or reſervedneſs in your converſation, no diſguiſe in your behaviour. Leave this to thoſe who have other deſigns in view; deſigns which will not bear the light. Be ye artleſs and ſimple to all mankind; that all may ſee the grace of God which is in you. And although ſome will harden their hearts, yet others will take knowledge, that ye have been with Jeſus, and by returning themſelves "to the great Biſhop of their ſouls, glorify your Father which is in heaven."

4. With this one deſign, that men may *glorify God in you*, go on in his name, and in the power of his might. Be not aſhamed, even to ſtand alone, ſo it be in the ways of God. Let the light which is in your heart, ſhine in all good works,

works, both works of piety and works of mercy. And in order to enlarge your ability of doing good, renounce all ſuperfluities. Cut off all unneceſſary expence, in food, in furniture, in apparel. Be a good ſteward of every gift of God, even of theſe his loweſt gifts. Cut off all unneceſſary expence of time, all needleſs or uſeleſs employments. And "whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." In a word, be thou full of faith and love: do good: ſuffer evil. And herein be thou "ſtedfaſt, unmoveable: yea, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as thou knoweſt that thy labour is not in vain in the Lord."

SERMON

SERMON XXIV.

DISCOURSE the FIFTH, on our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW V. 17, 18, 19, 20.

Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the Prophets; I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.
For verily I ſay unto you, Till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled.
Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven; but whoſoever ſhall do, and teach them, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
For I ſay unto you, That except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

1. AMONG the multitude of reproaches which fell upon him who *was deſpiſed and rejected of men*, it could not fail to be one, That he was a Teacher of novelties, an Introducer

doctor of a *new Religion*. This might be affirmed with the more colour, becauſe many of the expreſſions he had uſed, were not common among the Jews: either they did not uſe them at all, or not in the ſame ſenſe, not in ſo full and ſtrong a meaning. Add to this, that the worſhipping God *in ſpirit and in truth*, muſt always appear a new Religion, to thoſe who have hitherto known nothing but outſide worſhip, nothing but the *form of godlineſs*.

2. And it is not improbable, ſome might hope it was ſo: that he was aboliſhing the old Religion, and bringing in another; one which they might flatter themſelves, would be an eaſier way to heaven. But our Lord refutes in theſe words both the vain hopes of the one, and the groundleſs calumnies of the other.

I ſhall conſider them in the ſame order as they lie, taking each verſe for a diſtinct head of Diſcourſe.

I. 1. And, firſt, "Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to deſtroy but to fulfil."

The ritual or ceremonial law, delivered by Moſes to the children of Iſrael, containing all the injunctions and ordinances which related to the old ſacrifices and ſervice of the temple, our Lord indeed did come to deſtroy, to diſſolve and utterly aboliſh. To this bear all the Apoſtles witneſs: not only Barnabas and Paul, who vehemently withſtood thoſe who taught, That Chriſtians * "ought to keep the law of Moſes;" not only St. Peter, who termed the inſiſting on this, on the obſervance of the ritual law, a † "tempting

* Acts xv. 6. † Acts xv. 10.

God, and putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, saith he, nor we were able to bear: but all the Apostles, elders and brethren, being assembled with one accord," declared, That to command them to keep this law, was to * "subvert their souls: and that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them, to lay no such burthen upon them. This hand-writing of ordinances our Lord did blot out, take away and nail to his cross."

2. But the moral law, contained in the ten commandments, and enforced by the prophets, he did not take away. It was not the design of his coming, to revoke any part of this. This is a law, which never can be broken, which "stands fast as the faithful witness in heaven." The moral stands on an entirely different foundation, from the ceremonial or ritual law; which was only designed for a temporary restraint upon a disobedient and stiff-necked people: whereas this was from the beginning of the world; being *written not on tables of stone*, but on the hearts of all the children of men, when they came out of the hands of the Creator. And however the letters once wrote by the finger of God, are now in a great measure defaced by sin, yet can they not wholly be blotted out, while we have any consciousness of good and evil. Every part of this law must remain in force, upon all mankind, and in all ages: as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change; but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.

3. "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" Some have conceived our Lord to mean, I am come

* Ver. 24.

come to fulfil this, by my entire and perfect obedience to it. And it cannot be doubted but he did, in this sense fulfil every part of it. But this does not appear to be what he intends here, being foreign to the scope of his present discourse. Without question his meaning in this place is, (consistently with all that goes before and follows after) *I am come* to establish it in its fulness, in spite of all the glosses of men. I am come to place in a full and clear view, whatsoever was dark or obscure therein. I am come to declare the true and full import of every part of it: to shew the length and breadth, the entire extent of every commandment contained therein: and the height and depth, the inconceivable purity and spirituality of it in all its branches.

4. And this our Lord has abundantly performed in the preceding and subsequent parts of the discourse before us: in which he has not introduced a new Religion into the world, but the same which was from the beginning: a Religion, the substance of which is without question, "as old as the creation;" being coeval with man, and having proceeded from God, at the very time when *man became a living soul:* (the substance, I say, for some circumstances of it, now relate to man as a fallen creature.) A Religion witnessed to both by the law, and by the prophets in all succeeding generations. Yet was it never so fully explained, nor so thoroughly understood, till the great Author of it himself, condescended to give mankind this authentic comment on all the essential branches of it: at the same time declaring it should never be changed, but remain in force to the end of the world.

II. 1. "For verily I say unto you" (a solemn preface, which denotes both the importance and certainty of what is spoken) "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

One jot—It is literally, *not one iota*, not the most inconsiderable vowel, *or one tittle*, μία κεραία, one corner or point of a consonant. It is a proverbial expression, which signifies that no one commandment contained in the moral law, nor the least part of any one, however inconsiderable it might seem, should ever be disannulled.

"Shall in no wise pass from the law:" ἐὰν μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου. The double negative here used, strengthens the sense, so as to admit of no contradiction. And the word παρέλθῃ, it may be observed, is not barely *future*; declaring what *will* be: but has likewise the force of an *imperative*; ordering what *shall* be. It is a word of authority, expressing the sovereign will and power of him that spake: of him whose word is the law of heaven and earth, and stands fast for ever and ever.

"One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till heaven and earth pass;" or as it is expressed immediately after, ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται *till all*, (or rather *all things*) *be fulfilled*, till the consummation of all things. Here is therefore no room for that poor evasion (with which some have delighted themselves greatly) That "no part of the law was to pass away, till *all the law* was fulfilled: but it has been fulfilled by Christ; and therefore now must pass for the gospel to be established." Not so; the word *all* does not mean all th law, but all things in the universe; as neither

ther has the term *fulfilled*, any reference to the law, but to all things in heaven and earth.

2. From this we may learn, That there is no contrariety at all, between the law and the gospel; that there is no need for the law to pass away, in order to the establishing the gospel. Indeed neither of them supersedes the other, but they agree perfectly well together. Yea, the very same words considered in different respects, are parts both of the law and of the gospel: if they are considered as commandments, they are parts of the law; if as promises, of the gospel. Thus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," when considered as a commandment, is a branch of the law; when regarded as a promise, is an essential part of the gospel: the gospel being no other than the commands of the law, proposed by way of promises. Accordingly, poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and whatever else is enjoined in the holy law of God, are no other, when viewed in a gospel light, than so many great and precious promises.

3. There is therefore the closest connexion that can be conceived, between the law and the gospel. On the one hand, the law continually makes way for, and points us to the gospel: on the other, the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. The law for instance, requires us to love God, to love our neighbour, to be meek, humble or lowly: we feel that we are not sufficient for these things; yea, that *with man this is impossible*. But we see a promise of God, to give us that love, and to make us humble, meek and lowly. We lay hold of this gospel, of these glad tidings, it is done unto us according to our faith: and *the righteous-*

neſs of the law is fulfilled in us, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

We may yet farther obſerve, That every command in holy Writ, is only a covered promiſe. For by that ſolemn declaration, "This is the covenant I will make after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws in your minds, and write them in your hearts." God hath engaged to give whatſoever he commands. Does he command us then to *pray without ceaſing?* To *rejoice evermore?* To be *holy as he is holy?* It is enough. He will work in us this very thing. It ſhall be unto us according to his word.

4. But if theſe things are ſo, we cannot be at a loſs, what to think of thoſe who in all ages of the Church, have undertaken to change or ſuperſede ſome commands of God, as they profeſſed, by the peculiar direction of his Spirit. Chriſt has here given us an infallible rule, whereby to judge of all ſuch pretenſions. Chriſtianity, as it includes the whole moral law of God, both by way of injunction and of promiſe, if we will hear him, is deſigned of God, to be the laſt of all his diſpenſations. There is no other to come after this. This is to endure till the conſummation of all things. Of conſequence all ſuch new revelations, are of Satan, and not of God; and all pretences to another more perfect diſpenſation, fall to the ground of courſe. "Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: but *this* word ſhall not paſs away."

III. 1. "Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do and teach them,

them, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Who, what are they then, that make "The preaching of the law," a character of reproach? Do they not ſee on whom the reproach muſt fall? On whoſe head it muſt light at laſt? Whoſoever on this ground deſpiſeth us, deſpiſeth him that ſent us. For did ever any man preach the law like him? Even when he came, "not to condemn but to ſave the world." When he came purpoſely to "bring life and immortality to light through the goſpel?" Can any "preach the law" more expreſsly, more rigorouſly, than Chriſt does in theſe words? And who is he that ſhall amend them? Who is he that ſhall inſtruct the Son of God, how to preach? Who will teach him a better way of delivering the meſſage which he hath received of the Father?

2. "Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments," or one of the leaſt of theſe commandments—*Theſe commandments*, we may obſerve, is a term uſed by our Lord as equivalent with *the law:* or the *law and the Prophets*, which is the ſame thing, ſeeing the prophets added nothing to the law; but only declared, explained, or enforced it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

"Whoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments."—eſpecially if it be done wilfully or preſumptuoſly:—*one*—for "he that keepeth the whole law and [thus] offends in one point, is guilty of all:" the wrath of God abideth on him, as ſurely as if he had broken every one. So that no allowance is made for one darling luſt; no reſerve for one idol; no excuſe for refraining from all beſides, and only giving way to one boſom

ſom ſin. What God demands is, an entire obedience; we are to have an eye to all his commandments: otherwiſe we loſe all the labour we take in keeping ſome, and our poor ſouls for ever and ever.

One of theſe the leaſt, or one of the leaſt of theſe *commandments*.—Here is another excuſe cut off, whereby many, who cannot deceive God, miſerably deceive their own ſouls. "This ſin," ſaith the ſinner, "is it not a little one? Will not the Lord ſpare me in this thing! Surely he will not be extreme to mark this, ſince I do not offend in the greater matters of the law." Vain hope! Speaking after the manner of men, we may term theſe great and thoſe little commandments. But in reality, they are not ſo. If we uſe propriety of ſpeech, there is no ſuch thing as a little ſin: every ſin being a tranſgreſſion of the holy and perfect law, and an affront to the great Majeſty of heaven.

3. *And ſhall teach men ſo*—In ſome ſenſe it may be ſaid, that whoſoever openly breaks any commandment, teaches others to do the ſame: for example ſpeaks, and many times louder than precept. In this ſenſe it is apparent every open drunkard, is a teacher of drunkenneſs: every ſabbath-breaker is conſtantly teaching his neighbour, to profane the day of the Lord. But this is not all; an habitual breaker of the law, is ſeldom content to ſtop here. He generally teaches other men to do ſo too, by word as well as example: eſpecially when he hardens his neck, and hateth to be reproved. Such a ſinner ſoon commences an advocate for ſin: he defends what he is reſolved not to forſake. He excuſes the ſin which he will

will not leave, and thus directly teaches every ſin which he commits.

"He ſhall be called leaſt in the kingdom of heaven:" that is, ſhall have no part therein. He is a ſtranger to the kingdom of heaven which is on earth; he hath no portion in that inheritance; no ſhare of that righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Nor by conſequence can he have any part, in the glory which ſhall be revealed.

4. But if thoſe who even thus *break and teach* others to break, "one of the leaſt of theſe commandments, ſhall be called leaſt in the kingdom of heaven," ſhall have no part in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God; if even theſe ſhall be caſt into "outer darkneſs, where is wailing and gnaſhing of teeth:" then where will they appear, whom our Lord chiefly and primarily intends in theſe words? They who bearing the character of Teachers ſent from God, do nevertheleſs themſelves break his commandments, yea and openly teach others ſo to do; being corrupt both in life and doctrine.

5. Theſe are of ſeveral ſorts. Of the firſt ſort are they, who live in ſome wilful, habitual ſin. Now if an ordinary ſinner teaches by his example, how much more a ſinful Miniſter? Even if he does not attempt to defend, excuſe or extenuate his ſin. If he does, he is a murderer indeed, yea, the murderer-general of his congregation. He peoples the regions of death. He is the choiceſt inſtrument of the Prince of darkneſs. When he goes hence, "hell from beneath is moved to meet him at his coming." Nor can he ſink into the bottomleſs pit, without dragging a multitude after him.

6. Next

6. Next to these are the good-natured, good sort of men: who live an easy, harmless life, neither troubling themselves with outward sin, nor with inward holiness: men who are remarkable neither one way nor the other; neither for religion nor irreligion: who are very regular both in public and private; but do not pretend to be any stricter than their neighbours. A Minister of this kind breaks, not one, or a few only of the least commandments of God; but all the great and weighty branches of his law, which relate to the power of godliness: and all that require us to "pass the time of our sojourning in fear," to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling;" to have our "loins always girt and our lights burning;" to "strive or agonize to enter in at the strait-gate." And he *teaches men so*, by the whole form of his life, and the general tenor of his preaching, which uniformly tends to sooth those in their pleasing dream, who imagine themselves Christians and are not; to persuade all who attend upon his ministry, to sleep on and take their rest. No marvel therefore if both he and they that follow him, wake together in everlasting burnings.

7. But above all these in the highest rank of the enemies of the gospel of Christ, are they who openly and explicitly *judge the law* itself, and *speak evil of the law:* who teach men to break (λύσαι· to dissolve, to loose, to untie the obligation of) not one only, whether of the least or of the greatest, but all the commandments at a stroke: who teach, without any cover, in so many words, "What did our Lord do with the law? He abolished it." "There is but one duty, which is that of believing." "All commands are unfit for our times."

"From

"From any demand of the law no man is obliged now to go one ſtep, to give away one farthing, to eat or omit one morſel." This is indeed carrying matters with a high hand. This is withſtanding our Lord to the face, and telling him, That he underſtood not how to deliver the meſſage on which he was ſent. O Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge! Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!

8. The moſt ſurpriſing of all the circumſtances that attend this ſtrong deluſion, is that they who are given up to it, really believe, that they honour Chriſt, by overthrowing his law, and that they are magnifying his office, while they are deſtroying his doctrine! Yea, they honour him juſt as Judas did, when he ſaid, "Hail Maſter, and kiſſed him." And he may as juſtly ſay, to every one of them, "Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a kiſs?" It is no other than betraying him with a kiſs, to talk of his blood and take away his crown: to ſet light by any part of his law, under pretence of advancing his goſpel. Nor indeed can any one eſcape this charge, who preaches faith in any ſuch a manner as either directly or indirectly tends, to ſet aſide any branch of obedience: who preaches Chriſt ſo as to diſannul, or weaken in anywiſe the leaſt of the commandments of God.

9. It is impoſſible indeed to have too high an eſteem for *the faith of God's elect*. And we muſt all declare, "By grace ye are ſaved through faith: —not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt." We muſt cry aloud to every penitent ſinner, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved." But at the ſame time we muſt take care to let all men know, we eſteem no faith but that *which*

worketh

worketh by love: and that we are not *saved by faith*, unleſs ſo far as we are delivered from the power as well as the guilt of ſin. And when we ſay, "Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved;" we do not mean, "Believe and thou ſhalt ſtep from ſin to heaven: without any holineſs coming between; faith ſupplying the place of holineſs:" but, Believe and thou ſhalt be holy; believe in the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt have peace and power together. Thou ſhalt have power from him in whom thou believeſt, to trample ſin under thy feet; power to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and to ſerve him with all thy ſtrength. Thou ſhalt have power, "by patient continuance in well-doing, to ſeek for glory and honour and immortality." Thou ſhalt both *do and teach* all the commandments of God, from the leaſt even to the greateſt. Thou ſhalt teach them by thy life as well as thy words, and ſo "be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

IV. 1. Whatever other way we teach to the kingdom of heaven, to glory, honour, and immortality, be it called The way of Faith, or by any other name, it is in truth, The way to deſtruction. It will not bring a man peace at the laſt. For thus ſaith the Lord, "Verily I ſay unto you, except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The Scribes, mentioned ſo often in the New Teſtament as ſome of the moſt conſtant and vehement oppoſers of our Lord, were not ſecretaries, or men employed in writing only, as that term might incline us to believe. Neither were they Lawyers, in our common ſenſe of the word

(although the word νομικὸς is so rendered in our translation.) Their employment had no affinity at all, to that of a Lawyer among us. They were conversant with the laws of God, and not with the laws of man. These were their study: it was their proper and peculiar business, to read and expound the law and the prophets: particularly in the synagogues. They were the ordinary stated preachers among the Jews. So that if the sense of the original word was attended to, we might render it, the Divines. For these were the men that made Divinity their profession; and they were generally (as their name literally imports) Men of Letters; Men of the greatest account for learning that were then in the Jewish nation.

2. The Pharisees were a very ancient sect, or body of men, among the Jews: originally so called from the Hebrew word פרש, which signifies to separate or divide. Not that they made any formal separation from, or division in the national church. They were only distinguished from others, by greater strictness of life, by more exactness of conversation. For they were zealous of the law in the minutest points: paying tithes of mint, anise, cummin. And hence they were had in honour of all the people, and generally esteemed the holiest of men.

Many of the Scribes were of the sect of the Pharisees. Thus St. Paul himself, who was educated for a Scribe, first at the University of Tarsus, and after that in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel (one of the most learned Scribes or Doctors of the Law that were then in the nation) declares of himself before the council, * "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee:" and before

* Acts xxiii. 6.

King Agrippa, * " after the ſtraiteſt ſect of our Religion I lived a Phariſee." And the whole body of the Scribes generally eſteemed and acted in concert with the Phariſees. Hence we find our Saviour ſo frequently coupling them together, as coming in many reſpects under the ſame conſideration. In this place they ſeem to be mentioned together, as the moſt eminent profeſſors of Religion: the former of whom were accounted the wiſeſt, the latter the holieſt of men.

3. What *the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees* really was, it is not difficult to determine. Our Lord has preſerved an authentic account, which one of them gave of himſelf. And he is clear and full in deſcribing his own righteouſneſs; and cannot be ſuppoſed to have omitted any part of it. He *went up* indeed *into the temple to pray*; but was ſo intent upon his own virtues, that he forgot the deſign upon which he came. For it is remarkable, he does not properly pray at all. He only tells God, how wiſe and good he was. " God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers! or even as this publican. I faſt twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs." His righteouſneſs therefore conſiſted of three parts, firſt, faith he, " I am not as other men are." I am not an *extortioner*, not *unjuſt*, not an *adulterer*; not *even as this publican*. Secondly, *I faſt twice in the week*; and thirdly, *Give tithes of all that I poſſeſs*.

" I am not as other men are." This is not a ſmall point. It is not every man that can ſay this. It is as if he had ſaid, I do not ſuffer myſelf to be carried away by that great torrent, Cuſtom. I live not by cuſtom, but by reaſon; not by

* Acts xxvi. 5.

by the examples of men, but by the word of God. "I am not an extortioner, not unjuſt, not an adulterer:" however common theſe ſins are, even among thoſe who are called the people of God: (extortion, in particular, a kind of legal injuſtice; not puniſhable by any human law, the making gain of another's ignorance or neceſſity, having filled every corner of the land;) "nor even as this publican;" not guilty of any open or preſumptuous ſin; not an outward ſinner: but a fair, honeſt man, of blameleſs life and converſation.

4. "I faſt twice in the week." There is more implied in this, than we may at firſt be ſenſible of. All the ſtricter Phariſees obſerved the weekly faſts; namely every Monday and Thurſday. On the former day, they faſted in memory of Moſes receiving on that day (as their tradition taught) the two tables of ſtone written by the finger of God: on the latter, in memory of his caſting them out of his hand, when he ſaw the people dancing round the golden calf. On theſe days, they took no ſuſtenance at all, till three in the afternoon; the hour at which they began to offer up the evening ſacrifice in the temple. Till that hour it was their cuſtom to remain in the temple, in ſome of the corners, apartments, or courts thereof; that they might be ready to aſſiſt at all the ſacrifices, and to join in all the public prayers. The time between, they were accuſtomed to employ, partly in private addreſſes to God, partly in ſearching the Scriptures, in reading the Law and the Prophets, and meditating thereon. Thus much is implied in, *I faſt twice in the week*, the ſecond branch of the righteouſneſs of a Phariſee.

5. "I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs." This the Phariſee did with the utmoſt exactneſs. They would not except the moſt inconſiderable thing, no, not mint, aniſe and cummin. They would not keep back the leaſt part of what they believed properly to belong to God; but gave a full tenth of their whole ſubſtance yearly, and of all their increaſe, whatſoever it was.

Yea, the ſtricter Phariſees (as has been often obſerved, by thoſe who are verſed in the ancient Jewiſh writings) not content with giving one tenth of their ſubſtance to God, in his Prieſts and Levites, gave another tenth to God in the poor, and that continually. They gave the ſame proportion of all they had in alms, as they were accuſtomed to give in tithes. And this likewiſe they adjuſted with the utmoſt exactneſs, that they might not keep back any part, but might fully render unto God the things which were God's, as they accounted this to be. So that, upon the whole, they gave away, from year to year, an entire fifth of all that they poſſeſt.

6. This was *the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees:* a righteouſneſs, which in many reſpects, went far beyond the conception which many have been accuſtomed to entertain concerning it. But perhaps, it will be ſaid, It was all falſe and feigned; for they were all a company of hypocrites.—Some of them doubtleſs were; men who had really no Religion at all; no fear of God, or deſire to pleaſe him: who had no concern for the honour that cometh of God, but only for the praiſe of men. And theſe are they whom our Lord ſo ſeverely condemns, ſo ſharply reproves on many occaſions. But we

muſt

must not suppose, because many Pharisees were hypocrites, therefore all were so. Nor indeed is hypocrisy by any means essential to the character of a Pharisee. This is not the distinguishing mark of their sect. It is rather this, (according to our Lord's account) "They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." This is their genuine badge. But the Pharisee of this kind cannot be an hypocrite. He must be, in the common sense, sincere: otherwise he could not *trust in himself that he is righteous*. The man who was here commending himself to God, unquestionably thought himself righteous. Consequently, he was no hypocrite: he was not conscious to himself of any insincerity. He now spoke to God just what he thought, that he was abundantly better than other men.

But the example of St. Paul, were there no other, is sufficient to put this out of all question. He could not only say, when he was a Christian, * "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men:" but even concerning the time when he was a Pharisee; † "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." He was therefore sincere when he was a Pharisee, as well as when he was a Christian. He was no more an hypocrite when he persecuted the Church, than when he preached the faith which once he persecuted. Let this then be added to *the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, a sincere belief that they are righteous, and in all things *doing God service*.

* Acts xxiv. 16. † Chap. xxiii. 1.

7. And yet, "Except your righteouſneſs, ſaith our Lord, ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven." A ſolemn and weighty declaration! And which it behoves all who are called by the name of Chriſt, ſeriouſly and deeply to conſider. But before we enquire, How our righteouſneſs may exceed theirs, let us examine, whether at preſent we come up to it?

Firſt. A Phariſee was *not as other men are.* In externals he was ſingularly good. Are we ſo? Do we dare to be ſingular at all? Do we not rather ſwim with the ſtream? Do we not many times diſpenſe with Religion and Reaſon together, becauſe we would not *look particular?* Are we not often more afraid of being out of the faſhion, than being out of the way of ſalvation? Have we courage to ſtem the tide? To run counter to the world? "To obey God rather than man?" Otherwiſe the Phariſee leaves us behind at the very firſt ſtep. It is well if we overtake him any more.

But to come cloſer, can we uſe his firſt plea with God, which is in ſubſtance, "I do no harm, I live in no outward ſin; I do nothing, for which my own heart condemns me." Do you not? Are you ſure of that? Do you live in no practice for which your own heart condemns you? If you are not an adulterer, if you are not unchaſte, either in word or deed, are you not unjuſt? The grand meaſure of Juſtice, as well as of Mercy, is, Do unto others as thou wouldeſt they ſhould do unto thee. Do you walk by this rule? Do you never do unto any what you would not they ſhould do unto you? Nay, are you not groſsly

grosly unjust? Are you not an extortioner? Do you not make a gain of any one's ignorance or necessity? Neither in buying nor selling? Suppose ye were engaged in trade, do you demand, do you receive no more than the real value of what you sell? Do you demand, do you receive no more of the ignorant than of the knowing; of a little child, than of an experienced trader? If you do, why does not your heart condemn you? You are a barefaced extortioner. Do you demand no more than the usual price of the goods, of any who is in pressing want? If you do, this also is flat extortion. Indeed you do not come up to the righteousness of a Pharisee.

8. A Pharisee, secondly (to express his sense in our common way) used all the means of grace. As he fasted *often and much, twice in* every *week*, so he attended all the sacrifices. He was constant in public and private prayer, and in reading and hearing the scriptures. Do go you as far as this? Do you fast *much and often?* Twice in the week? I fear not. Once at least; "on all Fridays in the year?" (So our Church clearly and peremptorily enjoins all her members to do: to observe all these, as well as the Vigils and the forty days of Lent, as "days of fasting or abstinence.") Do you fast twice in the year? I am afraid some among us cannot plead even this!—Do you neglect no opportunity of attending or partaking of the Christian sacrifice? How many are they, who call themselves Christians, and yet are utterly regardless of it? Yet do not eat of that bread, nor drink of that cup, for months, perhaps years together? Do you every day, either hear the Scriptures, or read them and meditate thereon? Do you join in prayer with

with the great congregation? Daily, if you have opportunity: if not whenever you can, particularly on that day, which you *remember to keep it holy?* Do you ſtrive to *make* opportunities? Are you *glad when they ſay unto you*, "We will go into the houſe of the Lord?" Are you zealous of, and diligent in private prayer? Do you ſuffer no day to paſs without it? Rather, are not ſome of you ſo far from ſpending therein (with the Phariſee) ſeveral hours in one day, that you think one hour full enough, if not too much? Do you ſpend an hour in a day, or in a week, in praying to your Father which is in ſecret? Yea, an hour in a month? Have you ſpent one hour together in private prayer, ever ſince you was born? Ah poor Chriſtian! Shall not the Phariſee riſe up in the judgment againſt thee and condemn thee? His righteouſneſs is as far above thine, as the heaven is above the earth.

9. The Phariſee, thirdly, *paid tithes* and gave alms *of all that he poſſeſſ.* And in how ample a manner? So that he was (as we phraſe it) "a man that did much good." Do we come up to him here? Which of us is ſo abundant as he was, in good works? Which of us gives a fifth of all his ſubſtance to God? Both of the principal, and of the increaſe? Who of us, out of (ſuppoſe) an hundred pounds a year, gives twenty to God and the poor: Out of fifty ten; and ſo in a larger or a ſmaller proportion? When ſhall our righteouſneſs, in uſing all the means of grace, in attending all the ordinances of God, in avoiding evil, and doing good, equal at leaſt the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees?

10. Although

10. Although if it only equalled theirs, what would that profit? "For verily I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." But how can it exceed theirs? Wherein does the righteousness of a Christian exceed that of a Scribe or Pharisee.

Christian righteousness exceeds theirs, first, in the extent of it. Most of the Pharisees, though they were rigorously exact in many things, yet were emboldened by the traditions of the Elders to dispense with others of equal importance. Thus they were extremely punctual in keeping the fourth commandment: they would not even *rub an ear of corn* on the sabbath-day: but not at all in keeping the third, making little account of light, or even false-swearing. So that their righteousness was partial: whereas the righteousness of a real Christian is universal. He does not observe one, or some parts of the law of God, and neglect the rest; but keeps all his commandments, loves them all, values them above gold or precious stones.

11. It may be indeed, that some of the Scribes and Pharisees, endeavoured to keep all the commandments, and consequently were, as touching the righteousness of the law, that is, according to the letter of it, blameless. But still the righteousness of a Christian exceeds all this righteousness of a Scribe or Pharisee, by fulfilling the spirit as well as the letter of the law, by inward as well as outward obedience. In this, in the spirituality of it, it admits of no comparison. This is the point which our Lord has so largely proved, in the whole tenor of this discourse.

Their

Their righteouſneſs was external only; Chriſtian righteouſneſs is in the inner man. The Phariſee "cleanſed the outſide of the cup and the platter;" the Chriſtian is clean within. The Phariſee laboured to preſent God with a good life; the Chriſtian with a holy heart. The one ſhook off the leaves, perhaps the fruits of ſin; the other *lays the axe to the root:* as not being content with the outward form of godlineſs, how exact ſoever it be, unleſs the life, the ſpirit, the power of God unto ſalvation, be felt in the inmoſt ſoul.

Thus, to do no harm, to do good, to attend the ordinances of God, (the righteouſneſs of a Phariſee) are all external: whereas, on the contrary, poverty of ſpirit, mourning, meekneſs, hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, the love of our neighbour, and purity of heart, (the righteouſneſs of a Chriſtian) are all internal. And even peace-making (or doing good) and ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake, ſtand intitled to the bleſſings annexed to them, only as they imply theſe inward diſpoſitions, as they ſpring from, exerciſe and confirm them. So that whereas the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees was external only, it may be ſaid, in ſome ſenſe, that the righteouſneſs of a Chriſtian is internal only: all his actions and ſufferings being as nothing in themſelves, being eſtimated before God only by the tempers from which they ſpring.

12. Whoſoever therefore thou art, who beareſt the holy and venerable name of Chriſtian, ſee, firſt that thy righteouſneſs fall not ſhort of the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees. Be *not* thou *as other men are.* Dare to ſtand alone, to be, "Againſt Example, ſingularly good." If thou

thou *follow a multitude* at all, it must be, *to do evil.* Let not custom or fashion be thy guide; but Reason and Religion. The practice of others is nothing to thee: "every man must give an account of himself to God." Indeed, if thou canst save the soul of another, do: but at least save one, thy own. Walk not in the path of death, because it is broad, and many walk therein. Nay, by this very token thou mayest know it. Is the way wherein thou now walkest, a broad, well-frequented, fashionable way? Then it infallibly leads to destruction. O be not thou "damned for company:" cease from evil; fly from sin as from the face of a serpent. At least, do no harm. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Be not thou found in that number. Touching outward sins, surely the grace of God is even now sufficient for thee. "Herein, (at least,) exercise thyself to have a conscience void of offence, toward God and toward men."

Secondly. Let not thy righteousness fall short of theirs, with regard to the ordinances of God. If thy labour or bodily strength will not allow of thy fasting *twice in the week*, however deal faithfully with thy own soul, and fast as often as thy strength will permit. Omit no public, no private opportunity of pouring out thy soul in prayer. Neglect no occasion of eating that bread and drinking that cup, which is the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Be diligent in searching the Scriptures; read as thou mayest, and meditate therein day and night. Rejoice to embrace every opportunity, of hearing "the word of reconciliation declared by the Ambassadors of Christ, the Stewards of the mysteries of God. In using all the means of grace, in a constant

ſtant and careful attendance on every ordinance of God, live up to (at leaſt, till thou canſt go beyond) the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees."

Thirdly. Fall not ſhort of a Phariſee in doing good. Give alms of all thou doſt poſſeſs. Is any hungry? Feed him. Is he athirſt? Give him drink. Naked? Cover him with a garment. If thou haſt this world's goods, do not limit thy beneficence to a ſcanty proportion. Be merciful to the uttermoſt of thy power. Why not, even as this Phariſee? Now *make thyſelf friends*, while the time is, *of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when* thou *faileſt*, when this earthly tabernacle is diſſolved, they *may receive thee into everlaſting habitations.*

13. But reſt not here. Let thy *righteouſneſs* "exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees." Be not thou content, to "keep the whole law, and offend in one point. Hold thou faſt all his commandments, and all falſe ways do thou utterly abhor." Do all the things, whatſoever he hath commanded, and with all thy might. Thou canſt do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening thee, though without him thou canſt do nothing.

Above all, let thy righteouſneſs exceed theirs in the purity and ſpirituality of it. What is the exacteſt form of Religion to thee? The moſt perfect outſide righteouſneſs? Go thou higher and deeper than all this. Let thy Religion be the Religion of the heart. Be thou poor in ſpirit; little and baſe and mean and vile in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the duſt at the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus thy Lord. Be ſerious: let the whole ſtream of thy thoughts, words

words and works, be such as flows from the deepest conviction, that thou standest on the edge of the great gulph, that thou and all the children of men, are just ready to drop in, either into everlasting glory, or everlasting burnings. Be meek: let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering towards all men: at the same time that all which is in thee is athirst for God, the living God; longing to awake up after his likeness, and to be satisfied with it. Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind. In this spirit, do and suffer all things. Thus *exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, and thou shalt be *called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

SERMON XXV.

DISCOURSE the SIXTH, on our LORD'S SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VI. 1—15.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have praise of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

But

But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut the door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do: for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before you aſk him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

For, if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you:

But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.

1. IN the preceding chapter our Lord has deſcribed inward Religion, in its various branches. He has laid before us thoſe diſpoſitions of ſoul, which conſtitute real Chriſtianity: the inward tempers contained in that Holineſs, *without* which no man *ſhall ſee the Lord*; the affections which, when flowing from their proper fountain, from a living faith in God through Chriſt Jeſus, are intrinſically and eſſentially good, and acceptable to God. He proceeds to ſhew in this chapter, how all our actions likewiſe, even thoſe that are indifferent in their own nature,

may be made holy and good and acceptable to God, by a pure and holy intention. Whatever is done without this, he largely declares, is of no value before God. Whereas whatever outward works are thus consecrated to God, they are in his sight of great price.

2. The necessity of this purity of intention, he shews first, with regard to those, which are usually accounted religious actions, and indeed are such, when performed with a right intention. Some of these are commonly termed works of Piety; the rest, works of Charity or Mercy. Of the latter sort, he particularly names Almsgiving; of the former, Prayer and Fasting. But the directions given for these are equally to be applied to every work, whether of Charity or Mercy.

I. 1. And first, with regard to works of Mercy. "Take heed, saith he, that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." Take heed "that ye do not your alms." Although this only is named, yet is every work of charity included, every thing which we give, or speak, or do, whereby our neighbour may be profited, whereby another man may receive any advantage, either in his body or soul. The feeding the hungry, the clothing the naked, the entertaining or assisting the stranger, the visiting those that are sick or in prison, the comforting the afflicted; the instructing the ignorant, the reproving the wicked, the exhorting and encouraging the well-doer; and if there be any other work of mercy, it is equally included in this direction.

2. "Take

2. "Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." The thing which is here forbidden, is not, barely the doing good in the sight of men: this circumstance alone, that others see what we do, makes the action neither worse nor better: but the doing it before men, *to be seen of them;* with this view, from this intention only. I say, from *this intention only;* for this may, in some cases be a part of our intention; we may design that some of our actions should be seen, and yet they may be acceptable to God. We may intend, that our *light* should *shine before men*, when our conscience bears us witness, in the Holy Ghost, that our ultimate end in designing they should *see our good works*, is, *That they may glorify our Father which is in heaven.* But take heed that ye do not the least thing with a view to your own glory. Take heed, that a regard to the praise of men, have no place at all in your works of mercy. If ye seek your own glory, if you have any design to gain the honour that cometh of men, whatever is done with this view is nothing worth; it is not done unto the Lord; he accepteth it not; *ye have no reward* for this *of your Father which is in heaven.*

3. "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have praise of men." The word *Synagogue* does not here mean, a place of worship, but any place of public resort, such as the Market-place or Exchange. It was a common thing among the Jews, who were men of large fortunes, particularly among the Pharisees, to cause a trumpet to be sounded before them in the

moſt public parts of the city, when they were about to give any conſiderable alms. The pretended reaſon for this was, to call the poor together to receive it: but the real deſign, that they might have praiſe of men.—But be not thou like unto them. Do not thou cauſe a trumpet to be ſounded before thee. Uſe no oſtentation in doing good. Aim at the honour which cometh of God only. *They* who ſeek the praiſe of men, *have their reward.* They ſhall have no praiſe of God.

4. "But when thou doeſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." This is a provervial expreſſion, the meaning of which is, do it in as ſecret a manner as is poſſible: as ſecret as is conſiſtent with the doing it at all; (for it muſt not be left undone: omit no opportunity of doing good, whether ſecretly or openly:) and with the doing it in the moſt effectual manner. For here is alſo an exception to be made. When you are fully perſuaded in your own mind, that by your not concealing the good which is done, either you will yourſelf be enabled, or others excited to do the more good, then you may not conceal it: then let your light appear, and *ſhine to all that are in the houſe.* But unleſs where the glory of God and the good of mankind oblige you to the contrary act in as private and unobſerved a manner, as the nature of the thing will admit: "that thy alms may be in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, he ſhall reward you openly." Perhaps in the preſent world; many inſtances of this ſtand recorded in all ages: but infallibly in the world to come, before the general aſſembly of men and angels.

II. 1. From

II. 1. From works of Charity or Mercy, our Lord proceeds to thoſe which are termed works of Piety. "And when thou prayeſt," ſaith he, "thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. Thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites are." Hypocriſy then, or inſincerity, is the firſt thing we are to guard againſt in Prayer. Beware not to ſpeak what thou doſt not mean. Prayer is, the lifting up of the heart to God: all words of prayer without this are mere hypocriſy. Whenever therefore thou attempteſt to pray, ſee that it be thy one deſign, to commune with God, to lift up thy heart to him, to pour out thy ſoul before him. Not *as the hypocrites*, who *love*, or are wont, *to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues*, the Exchange or Market-places, *and in the corners of the ſtreets*, wherever the moſt people are, *that they may be ſeen of men*: this was the ſole deſign, the motive and end, of the prayers which they there repeated. "Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward." They are to expect none from your Father which is in heaven.

2. But it is not only, the having an eye to the praiſe of men, which cuts us off from any reward in heaven; which leaves us no room to expect the bleſſing of God, upon our works whether of Piety or Mercy. Purity of intention is equally deſtroyed by a view to any temporal reward whatever. If we repeat our prayers, if we attend the public worſhip of God, if we relieve the poor, with a view to gain or intereſt, it is not a whit more acceptable to God, than if it were done with a view to praiſe. Any temporal view, any motive whatever on this ſide eternity, any

deſign

design but that of promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of men, for God's sake, makes every action, however fair it may appear to men, an abomination unto the Lord.

3. "But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." There is a time, when thou art openly to glorify God, to pray and praise him in the great congregation. But when thou desirest more largely and more particularly to make thy requests known unto God, whether it be in the evening, or in the morning, or at noon-day, "enter into thy closet and shut the door." Use all the privacy thou canst. (Only leave it not undone, whether thou hast any closet, any privacy or no. Pray to God if it be possible, when none seeth but he; but if otherwise, pray to God.) Thus "pray to thy Father which is in secret:" pour out all thy heart before him. "And thy Father which seeth in secret, he shall reward thee openly."

4. *But when ye pray*, even in secret, *use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do*, Μὴ βαττολογήσητε. Do not use abundance of words without any meaning. Say not the same thing over and over again; think not the fruit of your prayers depends on the length of them; like the Heathens: for *they think they shall be heard, for their much speaking*.

The thing here reproved, is not simply the length, no more than the shortness of our prayers: but, first, length without meaning; the speaking much, and meaning little or nothing: the using (not all repetitions; for our Lord himself prayed thrice, repeating the same words; but) vain repetitions, as the Heathens did, reciting the names of their gods over and over: as they do among Christians, (vulgarly so called) and not among the Papists

piſts only, who ſay over and over the ſame ſtring of prayers, without ever feeling what they ſpeak: ſecondly, the thinking to be heard for our much ſpeaking, the fancying God meaſures prayers for their length, and is beſt pleaſed with thoſe which contain the moſt words, which ſound the longeſt in his ears. Theſe are ſuch inſtances of ſuperſtition and folly, as all who are named by the name of Chriſt, ſhould leave to the Heathens, to them on whom the glorious light of the goſpel hath never ſhined.

5. "Be not ye therefore like unto them." Ye who have taſted of the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, are thoroughly convinced, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye aſk him." So that the end of your praying, is not to inform God, as though he knew not your wants already; but rather to inform yourſelves, to fix the ſenſe of thoſe wants more deeply in your hearts, and the ſenſe of your continual dependence on him, who only is able to ſupply all your wants. It is not ſo much to move God, who is always more ready to give than you to aſk; as to move yourſelves, that you may be willing and ready to receive, the good things he has prepared for you.

III. 1. After having taught the true nature and ends of Prayer, our Lord ſubjoins an example of it: even that divine form of prayer, which ſeems in this place to be propoſed by way of pattern chiefly, as the model and ſtandard of all our prayers; "after this manner therefore pray ye." Whereas elſewhere he enjoins the uſe of theſe very words, * "He ſaid unto them, when ye pray, ſay."

* Luke xi. 2.

2. We

2. We may obſerve, in general, concerning this divine prayer. Firſt, That it contains all we can reaſonably or innocently pray for. There is nothing which we have need to aſk of God, nothing which we can aſk without offending him, which is not included either directly or indirectly in this comprehenſive form: ſecondly, That it contains all we can reaſonbly or innocently deſire; whatever is for the glory of God, whatever is needful or profitable not only for ourſelves, but for every creature in heaven and earth. And indeed our prayers are the proper teſt of our deſires; nothing being fit to have a place in our deſires, which is not fit to have a place in our prayers; what we may not pray for, neither ſhould we deſire: thirdly, That it contains all our duty to God and man: whatſoever things are pure and holy, whatſoever God requires of the children of men, whatſoever is acceptable in his ſight, whatſoever it is whereby we may profit our neighbour, being expreſſed or implied therein.

3. It conſiſts of three parts, the preface, the petitions, and the doxology or concluſion. The preface, "Our Father which art in heaven," lays a general foundation for prayer; comprizing what we muſt firſt know of God, before we can pray, in confidence of being heard. It likewiſe points out to us all thoſe tempers, with which we are to approach to God, which are moſt eſſentially requiſite, if we deſire either our prayers or our lives ſhould find acceptance with him.

4. "*Our Father.*" If he is a Father, then he is good, then he is loving to his children. And here is the firſt and great reaſon for prayer. God is willing to bleſs; let us aſk for a bleſſing. "*Our Father,*"—Our Creator; the Author of our being;

ing; who raiſed us from the duſt of the earth, who breathed into us the breath of life, and we became living ſouls. But if he made us, let us aſk and he will not with-hold any good thing from the work of his own hands. "*Our Father*," —Our Preſerver; who day by day ſuſtains the life he has given: of whoſe continuing love we now and every moment receive life and breath, and all things. So much the more boldy let us come to him, and *we* ſhall "find mercy and grace to help in time of need." Above all, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of all that believe in him: who juſtifies us "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus:" who hath "blotted out all our ſins, and healed all our infirmities;" who hath received us for *his own children, by adoption and grace*, and "becauſe we are ſons, hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father: who hath begotten us again of incorruptible ſeed, and createth us anew in Chriſt Jeſus." Therefore we know that he heareth us always; therefore we *pray* to him *without ceaſing*. We pray, becauſe we love. And we love him becauſe he firſt loved us."

5. "*Our Father*,"—Not *mine* only who now cry unto him; but *ours*, in the moſt extenſive ſenſe. The God and *Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh*: the Father of angels and men: (ſo the very Heathens acknowledged him to be, Πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε·) The Father of the univerſe, of all the families both in heaven and earth. Therefore with him there is no reſpect of perſons. He loveth all that he hath made. "He is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works. And the Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and put their truſt in his mercy; in them that truſt in him through

through the Son of his Love, knowing they are *accepted through the beloved.* But " if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another." Yea, and all mankind, ſeeing " God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," even to die the death, that they " might not periſh, but have everlaſting life."

6. *Which art in heaven:* high and lifted up; God over all, bleſſed for ever. Who ſitting on the circle of the heavens, beholded all things both in heaven and earth. Whoſe eye pervades the whole ſphere of created Being; yea and of uncreated night: unto whom *known are all his works*, and all the works of every creature, not only *from the beginning of the world*, (a poor, low, weak tranſlation) but ἀπ' αἰῶνος· from all eternity, from everlaſting to everlaſting: who conſtrains the hoſt of heaven, as well as the children of men, to cry out with wonder and amazement, O the depth! " The depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and of the knowledge of God!" *Which art in heaven*—the Lord and Ruler of all, ſuperintending and diſpoſing all things: who art the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the bleſſed and only Potentate: who art ſtrong and girded about with power, doing whatſoever pleaſeth thee! The Almighty: for whenſoever thou willeſt, to do is preſent with thee. *In heaven*,—eminently there. Heaven is thy throne, the place where thine honour particularly dwelleth. But not there alone; for thou filleſt heaven and earth, the whole expanſe of ſpace. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord moſt high!

Therefore ſhould we " ſerve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence." Therefore ſhould we think, ſpeak, and act, as continually under

under the eye, in the immediate preſence of the Lord, the King.

7. "Hallowed be thy name." This is the firſt of the ſix petitions, whereof the prayer itſelf is compoſed. The name of God is God himſelf; the nature of God, ſo far as it can be diſcovered to man: it means therefore, together with his exiſtence, all his attributes or perfections—His eternity, particularly ſignified by his great and incommunicable name JEHOVAH, as the apoſtle John tranſlates it, τὸ ἀ, καὶ τὸ ω, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος. ὁ ὢν, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος· "The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, he which is, and which was, and which is to come:"—his *fulneſs of being*, denoted by his other great name, *I am that I am*—His Omnipreſence—His Omnipotence: who is indeed the only Agent in the material world: all matter being eſſentially dull and inactive, and moving only as it is moved by the finger of God: and he is the ſpring of action in every creature, viſible and inviſible; which could neither act nor exiſt, without the continued influx and agency of his almighty power.—His Wiſdom, clearly deduced from the things that are ſeen, from the goodly order of the univerſe.—His Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, diſcovered to us in the very firſt line of his written word ברא אלהים: literally, *the Gods created*, a plural noun joined with a verb of the ſingular number: as well as in every part of his ſubſequent revelations, given by the mouth of all his holy Prophets and Apoſtles.—His eſſential Purity and Holineſs.—And above all, his Love, which is the very brightneſs of his glory.

In praying that God, or his *name* may *be hallowed* or glorified, we pray that he may be known, ſuch as he is, by all that are capable thereof, by

all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge: that he may be duly honoured, and feared, and loved by all in heaven above, and in the earth beneath; by all angels and men, whom for that end he has made capable of knowing and loving him to eternity.

8. *Thy kingdom come.* This has a close connexion with the preceding petition. In order that the name of God may be hallowed, we pray that his kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, may come. This kingdom then comes to a particular person, when he *repents and believes the gospel:* when he is taught of God, not only to know himself, but to know Jesus Christ and him crucified. As "this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent" so it is the kingdom of God begun below, set up in the believers heart: the Lord God Omnipotent then reigneth, when he is known through Christ Jesus. He taketh unto himself his mighty power, that he may subdue all things unto himself. He goeth on in the soul conquering, and to conquer, till he hath put all things under his feet, till "every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

When therefore God shall "give his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;" when "all kingdoms shall bow before him, and all nations shall do him service;" when "the mountain of the Lord's house," the Church of Christ "shall be established in the top of the mountain;" when "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved:" then shall it be seen, that "the Lord is King and hath put on glorious apparel, appearing to every soul of

of man, as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. And it is meet for all thoſe who *love his appearing*, to pray that he would haſten the time: that this his kingdom, the kingdom of grace may come quickly, and ſwallow up all the kingdoms of the earth; that all mankind receiving him for their King, truly believing in his name, may be filled with righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy, with holineſs and happineſs, till they are removed hence into his heavenly kingdom, there to reign with him for ever and ever.

For this alſo we pray in thoſe words, *Thy kingdom come:* we pray for the coming of his everlaſting kingdom, the kingdom of glory in heaven, which is the continuation and perfection of the kingdom of grace on earth. Conſequently this, as well as the preceding petition, is offered up for the whole intelligent creation, who are all intereſted in this grand event, the final renovation of all things by God's putting an end to miſery and ſin, to infirmity and death, taking all things into his own hands, and ſetting up the kingdom which endureth throughout all ages.

Exactly anſwerable to all this, are thoſe awful words, in the prayer, at the burial of the dead; "Beſeeching thee, that it may pleaſe thee of thy gracious goodneſs, ſhortly to accompliſh the number of thine elect, and to haſten thy kingdom: that we with all thoſe that are departed, in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect conſummation and bliſs, both in body and ſoul, in thy everlaſting glory."

9. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is the neceſſary and immediate conſequence, wherever the kingdom of God is come:

wherever God dwells in the soul by faith, and Christ reigns in the heart by love.

It is probable, many, perhaps the generality of men, at the first view of these words, are apt to imagine, they are only an expression of, or petition for resignation; for a readiness to suffer the will of God, whatsoever it be concerning us. And this is unquestionably a divine and excellent temper, a most precious gift of God. But this is not what we pray for in this petition, at least not in the chief and primary sense of it. We pray, not so much for a passive, as for an active conformity to the will of God, in saying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

How is it done by the angels of God in heaven? Those who now circle his throne rejoicing? They do it *willingly*; they love his commandments, and gladly hearken to his words. It is their meat and drink to do his will; it is their highest glory and joy. They do it *continually*; there is no interruption in their willing service. They rest not day nor night, but employ every hour (speaking after the manner of men; otherwise our measures of duration, days, and nights, and hours, have no place in eternity) in fulfilling his commands, in executing his designs, in performing the counsel of his will. And they do it *perfectly*. No sin, no defect belongs to angelic minds. It is true, *the stars are not pure in his sight*, even the morning-stars that sing together before him. *In his sight*, that is in comparison of him, the very angels are not pure. But this does not imply, that they are not pure *in themselves*. Doubtless they are; they are without spot and blameless. They are

altogether

altogether devoted to his will, and perfectly obedient in all things.

If we view them in another light, we may observe, the angels of God in heaven, do *all* the will of God. And they do nothing else, nothing but what they are absolutely assured is his will. Again, they do all the will of God, *as* he willeth, in the manner which pleases him, and no other. Yea, and they do this, only *because* it is his will; for this and no other reason.

10. When therefore we pray, That the "will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven," the meaning is, That all the inhabitants of the earth, even the whole race of mankind, may do the will of their Father which is in heaven, as *willingly* as the holy angels: that these may do it *continually* even as they, without any interruption of their willing service: yea, and that they may do it *perfectly*; that "the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may make them perfect in every good work to do his will, and work in them all which is well pleasing in his sight."

In other words, we pray, That we and all mankind, may do the whole will of God in all things: nothing else, not the least thing but what is the holy and acceptable will of God. We pray that we may do the whole will of God *as* he willeth, in the manner that pleases him: and lastly, That we may do it, *because* it is his will: that this may be the sole reason and ground, the whole and only motive of whatsoever we think, or whatsoever we speak or do.

11. "Give us this day our daily bread." In the three former petitions, we have been praying for all mankind. We come now more particu-

larly to desire a supply for our own wants. Not that we are directed even here, to confine our prayer altogether to ourselves: but this and each of the following petitions may be used for the whole Church of Christ upon earth.

By *bread* we may understand, all things needful whether for our souls or bodies: τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν *the things pertaining to life and godliness.* We understand not barely of the outward bread, which our Lord terms *the meat which perisheth;* but much more the spiritual bread, the grace of God, the food *which endureth unto everlasting life.* It was the judgment of many of the ancient Fathers, that we are here to understand, the sacramental bread also: daily received in the beginning by the whole Church of Christ, and highly esteemed till the love of many waxed cold, as the grand channel whereby the grace of his Spirit was conveyed to the souls of all the children of God.

"Our daily bread." The word we render *daily* has been differently explained by different Commentators. But the most plain and natural sense of it seems to be this, which is retained in almost all translations, as well ancient as modern: what is sufficient for this day; and so for each day, as it succeeds.

12. *Give us.* For we claim nothing of right, but only of free mercy. We deserve not the air we breathe, the earth that bears, or the sun that shines upon us. All our desert, we own, is hell. But God loves us freely. Therefore we ask him to *give*, what we can no more *procure* for ourselves, than we can *merit* it at his hands.

Not that either the goodness or the power of God is a reason for us to stand idle. It is his will,

will, that we ſhould uſe all diligence in all things, that we ſhould employ our utmoſt endeavours, as much as if our ſucceſs were the natural effect of our own wiſdom and ſtrength. And then, as though we had done nothing, we are to depend on him, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

This day. For we are to take no thought for the morrow. For this very end has our wiſe Creator divided life into thoſe little portions of time, ſo clearly ſeparated from each other; that we might look on every day, as a freſh gift of God, another life, which we may devote to his glory; and that every evening may be the cloſe of life, beyond which we are to ſee nothing but eternity.

13. "And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us." As nothing but ſin can hinder the bounty of God from flowing forth upon every creature, ſo this petition naturally follows the former; that all hinderances being removed, we may the more clearly truſt in the God of love, for every manner of thing which is good.

Our treſpaſſes. The word properly ſignifies *our debts.* Thus our ſins are frequently repreſented in Scripture: every ſin laying us under a freſh debt to God; to whom we already owe, as it were, ten thouſand talents. What then can we anſwer when he ſhall ſay, *Pay me that thou oweſt?* We are utterly inſolvent: we have nothing to pay: we have waſted all our ſubſtance. Therefore if he deal with us according to the rigour of his law, if he exact what he juſtly may, he muſt command us to be "bound hand and foot, and delivered over to the tormentors."

Indeed

Indeed we are already bound hand and foot, by the chains of our own ſins. Theſe, conſidered with regard to ourſelves, are chains of iron and fetters of braſs. They are wounds, wherewith the world, the fleſh and the devil, have gaſhed and mangled us all over. They are diſeaſes that drink up our blood and ſpirits, that bring us down to the chambers of the grave. But conſidered, as they are here, with regard to God, they are debts immenſe and numberleſs. Well therefore, ſeeing we have nothing to pay, may we cry unto him, that he would *frankly forgive* us all.

The word tranſlated *forgive*, implies either to forgive a debt, or to unlooſe a chain. And if we attain the former, the latter follows of courſe; if our debts are forgiven, the chains fall off our hands. As ſoon as ever, through the free grace of God in Chriſt, we *receive forgiveneſs of ſins*, we receive likewiſe "a lot among thoſe which are ſanctified, by faith which is in him." Sin has loſt its power: it has no dominion over thoſe, who *are under grace*, that is, in favour with God. As "there is now no condemnation for them that are in Chriſt Jeſus," ſo they are freed from ſin as well as from guilt. The righteouſneſs of the law is fulfilled in them, and they walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit."

14. "As we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us." In theſe words our Lord clearly declares, both on what condition, and in what degree or manner we may look to be forgiven of God. All our treſpaſſes and ſins are forgiven us, *if* we forgive, and *as* we forgive others. This is a point of the utmoſt importance. And our bleſſed Lord is ſo jealous, leſt at any time we ſhould

ſhould let it ſlip out of our thoughts, that he not only inſerts it in the body of his prayer, but preſently after repeats it twice over. * "If, ſaith he, ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes." Secondly, God forgives us, *as* we forgive others. So that if any malice or bitterneſs, if any taint of unkindneſs or anger remains, if we do not clearly, fully, and from the heart, forgive all men their treſpaſſes, we ſo far cut ſhort the forgiveneſs of our own. God cannot clearly and fully forgive us. He may ſhew us ſome degree of mercy. But we will not ſuffer him to blot out all our ſins, and forgive all our iniquities.

In the mean time, while we do not from our heart, forgive our neighbour his treſpaſſes, what manner of prayer are we offering to God, whenever we utter theſe words? We are indeed ſetting God at open defiance: we are daring him to do his worſt. Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us! That is in plain terms, "Do not forgive us at all: we deſire no favour at thy hands. We pray, that thou wilt keep our ſins in remembrance, and that thy wrath may abide upon us." But can you ſeriouſly offer ſuch a prayer to God? And hath he not yet caſt you quick into hell? O tempt him no longer! Now, even now, by his grace, forgive as you would be forgiven! Now have compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, as God hath had and will have pity on thee.

15. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." "And lead us not into temptation."

* Ver. 14, 15.

temptation." The word tranſlated *temptation*, means trial of any kind. And ſo the Engliſh word temptation was formerly taken in an indifferent ſenſe: although now it is uſually underſtood, of ſolicitation to ſin. St. James uſes the word in both theſe ſenſes; firſt, in its general, then in its reſtained acceptation. He takes it in the former ſenſe when he ſaith, * "Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, [or approved of God,] he ſhall receive the crown of life." He immediately adds, taking the word in the latter ſenſe, "Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt," or *deſire*, ἐξελκόμενος, drawn out of God, in whom alone he is ſafe, *and enticed*, caught as a fiſh with a bait. Then it is, when he is thus *drawn away or enticed*, then he properly *enters into temptation*. The temptation covers him as a cloud: it overſpreads his whole ſoul. Then how hardly ſhall he eſcape out of the ſnare? Therefore we beſeech God, "not to lead us into temptation," that is (ſeeing God *tempteth no man*) not to ſuffer us to be led into it. *But deliver us from evil:* rather, *from the evil one*, ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ. Ὁ πονηρός is unqueſtionably *the wicked One*, emphatically ſo called, the prince and god of this world, who works with mighty power in the children of diſobedience. But all thoſe who are the children of God by faith, are delivered out of his hands. He may fight againſt them: and ſo he will. But he cannot conquer, unleſs they betray their own ſouls. He may torment for a time; but he cannot

* Chap. i. ver. 12, 13.

not deſtroy; for God is on their ſide, who will not fail in the end, to *avenge his own elect, that cry unto him, day and night*, "Lord, when we are tempted, ſuffer us not to enter into temptation. Do thou make a way for us to eſcape, that the wicked One touch us not."

16. The concluſion of this divine prayer, commonly called The Doxology, is a ſolemn thankſgiving, a compendious acknowledgment of the attributes and works of God. "For thine is the kingdom;" the ſovereign right of all things that are, or ever were created: yea, thy kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages. "The power:" the executive power, whereby thou governeſt all things in thy everlaſting kingdom, whereby thou doſt whatſoever pleaſeth thee, in all places of thy dominion.—"And the glory;" the praiſe due from every creature, for thy power and the mightineſs of thy kingdom, and for all thy wondrous works, which thou workeſt from everlaſting, and ſhalt do, world without end, *for ever and ever! Amen!* So be it!

I believe it will not be unacceptable to the ſerious reader to ſubjoin

A PARAPHRASE on the LORD'S PRAYER.

1 FATHER of all, whoſe pow'rful voice
Call'd forth this univerſal frame,
Whoſe mercies over all rejoice,
Through endleſs ages ſtill the ſame:
Thou by thy word upholdeſt all;
Thy bounteous Love to all is ſhew'd,
Thou hear'ſt thy ev'ry creature call,
And filleſt every mouth with good.

2 In

2 In heav'n thou reign'ſt, enthron'd in light,
Nature's expanſe beneath thee ſpread;
Earth, air, and ſea, before thy ſight,
And hell's deep gloom are open laid;
Wiſdom, and might, and love are thine:
Proſtrate before thy face we fall,
Confeſs thine attributes divine,
And hail thee ſovereign Lord of all.

3 Thee, ſovereign Lord, let all confeſs,
That moves in earth, or air, or ſky,
Revere thy power, thy goodneſs bleſs,
Tremble before thy piercing eye.
All ye who owe to Him your birth,
In praiſe your ev'ry hour employ:
JEHOVAH reigns! Be glad, O earth,
And ſhout, ye morning-ſtars, for joy.

4 Son of thy Sire's eternal love,
Take to thyſelf thy mighty pow'r;
Let all earth's ſons thy mercy prove,
Let all thy bleeding grace adore.
The triumphs of thy love diſplay,
In every heart reign thou alone;
Till all thy foes confeſs thy ſway,
And glory ends what grace begun.

5 Spirit of grace, and health, and power,
Fountain of light and love below,
Abroad thine healing influence ſhower,
O'er all the nations let it flow.
Inflame our hearts with perfect love,
In us the work of faith fulfil:
So not heaven's hoſt ſhall ſwifter move
Than we on earth to do thy will.

6 Father, 'tis thine each day to yield
Thy children's wants a freſh ſupply;
Thou cloth'ſt the lilies of the field,
And heareſt the young ravens cry.
On thee we caſt our care; we live
Through thee, who know'ſt our ev'ry need;
O feed us with thy grace, and give
Our ſouls this day the living bread.

7 Eternal, ſpotleſs Lamb of God,
Before the world's foundation ſlain,
Sprinkle us ever with thy blood,
O cleanſe and keep us ever clean.
To ev'ry ſoul (all praiſe to thee)
Our bowels of compaſſion move:
And all mankind by this may ſee
God is in us; for God is love.

8 Giver and Lord of life, whoſe pow'r
And guardian care for all are free;
To thee in fierce temptation's hour,
From ſin and Satan let us flee.
Thine, Lord, we are, and ours thou art,
In us be all thy goodneſs ſhew'd;
Renew, enlarge, and fill our heart
With peace and joy, and heav'n and God.

9 Bleſſing and honour, praiſe and love,
Co-equal, co-eternal, Three,
In earth below, in heav'n above,
By all thy works be paid to thee.
Thrice holy, thine the kingdom is,
The pow'r omnipotent is Thine;
And when created nature dies,
Thy never-ceaſing glories ſhine.

SERMON XXVI.

DISCOURSE the SEVENTH, on our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VI. 16, 17, 18.

Moreover, when ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites, of a ſad countenance: for they diſfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward.
But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face;
That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.

1. IT has been the endeavour of Satan from the beginning of the world, to put aſunder what God hath joined together; to ſeparate inward from outward Religion, to ſet one of theſe at variance with the other. And herein he has met

met with no ſmall ſucceſs, among thoſe who were *ignorant of his devices.*

Many in all ages, having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, have been ſtrictly attached to the *righteouſneſs of the law*, the performance of outward duties; but in the mean time wholly regardleſs of inward righteouſneſs, *the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* And many have run into the oppoſite extreme, diſregarding all outward duties, perhaps even "ſpeaking evil of the law, and judging the law," ſo far as it enjoins the performance of them.

2. It is by this very device of Satan, that faith and works have been ſo often ſet at variance with each other. And many who had a real zeal for God, have for a time fallen into the ſnare on either hand. Some have magnified faith to the utter excluſion of good works, not only from being the cauſe of our juſtification (for we know that man is "juſtified freely by the redemption which is in Jeſus,") but from being the neceſſary fruit of it, yea from the having any place in the religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Others, eager to avoid that dangerous miſtake, have run as much too far the contrary way; and either maintained, That good works were the cauſe, at leaſt the previous condition of juſtification; or ſpoken of them as if they were all in all, the whole religion of Jeſus Chriſt.

3. In the ſame manner have the end and the means of religion, been ſet at variance with each other. Some well-meaning men, have ſeemed to place all religion, in attending the prayers of the Church, in receiving the Lord's ſupper, in hearing ſermons, and reading books of piety: neglecting mean time the end of all theſe, The love

of God and their neighbour. And this very thing has confirmed others in the neglect, if not contempt of the ordinances of God; so wretchedly abused to undermine and overthrow the very end they were designed to establish.

4. But of all the means of grace there is scarce any, concerning which men have run into greater extremes, than that of which our Lord speaks in the above-mentioned words, I mean, religious fasting. How have some exalted this beyond all Scripture and Reason? And others utterly disregarded it? As it were, revenging themselves, by undervaluing, as much as the former had overvalued it. Those have spoken of it, as if it were all in all; if not the end itself, yet infallibly connected with it: these, as if it were just nothing, as if it were a fruitless labour, which had no relation at all thereto. Whereas it is certain the truth lies between them both. It is not all; nor yet is it nothing. It is not the end, but it is a precious means thereto; a means which God himself has ordained; and in which therefore, when it is duly used, he will surely give us his blessing.

In order to set this in the clearest light, I shall endeavour to shew, first, What is the nature of Fasting, and what the several sorts and degrees thereof: secondly, What are the reasons, grounds and ends of it: thirdly, How we may answer the most plausible objections against it: and fourthly, In what manner it should be performed.

I. 1. I shall endeavour to shew, first, What is the nature of Fasting, and what the several sorts and degrees thereof. As to the nature of it, all the inspired Writers, both in the Old Testament and

and the New, take the word, to fast, in one single sense, for not to eat, to abstain from food. This is so clear, that it would be labour lost to quote the words of David, Nehemiah, Isaiah, and the Prophets which followed, or of our Lord and his Apostles; all agreeing in this, that, to fast, is not to eat for a time prescribed.

2. To this other circumstances were usually joined by them of old, which had no necessary connexion with it. Such were the neglect of their apparel, the laying aside those ornaments which they were accustomed to wear: the putting on mourning, the strewing ashes upon their head, or wearing sackcloth next their skin. But we find little mention made in the New Testament, of any of these indifferent circumstances. Nor does it appear that any stress was laid upon them, by the Christians of the purer ages; however some penitents might voluntarily use them, as outward signs of inward humiliation. Much less did the Apostles or the Christians cotemporary with them, beat or tear their own flesh. Such discipline as this was not unbecoming the Priests or worshippers of Baal. The gods of the Heathens were but devils; and it was doubtless acceptable to their devil-god, when his Priests, "* cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner, till the blood gushed out upon them:" but it cannot be pleasing to Him, nor become his followers, who *came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*

3. As to the degrees or measures of fasting, we have instances of some who have fasted several days together. So Moses, Elijah, and our blessed Lord, being endued with supernatural strength for that purpose, are recorded to have fasted with-

* 1 Kings xviii. 28.

out intermiſſion, *forty days and forty nights*. But the time of faſting more frequently mentioned in Scripture, is, one day, from morning till evening. And this was the faſt commonly obſerved among the ancient Chriſtians. But beſide theſe they had alſo their half faſts (*Semijejunia*, as *Tertullian* ſtiles them) on the fourth and ſixth days of the week (Wedneſday and Friday) throughout the year; on which they took no ſuſtenance till three in the afternoon, the time when they returned from the public ſervice.

4. Nearly related to this, is what our Church ſeems peculiarly to mean by the term *Abſtinence*: which may be uſed when we cannot faſt entirely by reaſon of ſickneſs or bodily weakneſs. This is, the eating little; the abſtaining in part; the taking a ſmaller quantity of food than uſual. I do not remember any ſcriptural inſtance of this. But neither can I condemn it. For the Scripture does not: it may have its uſe, and receive a bleſſing from God.

5. The loweſt kind of faſting, if it can be called by that name, is the abſtaining from pleaſant food. Of this we have ſeveral inſtances in Scripture, beſides that of Daniel and his brethren, who from a peculiar conſideration, namely, that they might * "not defile themſelves with the portions of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank," (a daily proviſion of which the King had appointed for them *requeſted* and obtained of *the Prince of the Eunuchs, pulſe to eat and water to drink*. Perhaps from a miſtaken imitation of this, might ſpring the very ancient cuſtom, of abſtaining from fleſh and wine, during ſuch times as were ſet apart for faſting

* Daniel iv. 5, &c.

fasting and abstinence. If it did not rather arise from a supposition that these were the most pleasant food, and a belief, That it was proper to use what was least pleasing, at those times of solemn approach to God.

6. In the Jewish Church, there were some stated fasts. Such was the fast of the seventh month, appointed by God himself to be observed by all Israel, under the severest penalty. † "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, On the tenth day of the seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement; and ye shall afflict your souls —to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." In after ages several other stated fasts were added to these. So mention is made by the Prophet Zechariah, of the Fast, not only "of the seventh, but also of ‖ the fourth, of the fifth, and of the tenth month."

In the ancient Christian Church there were likewise stated fasts, and those both annual and weekly. Of the former sort was that before Easter; observed by some for eight and forty hours: by others for an entire week; by many for two weeks, taking no sustenance till the evening of each day. Of the latter, those of the fourth and sixth days of the week observed (as Epiphanius writes, remarking it as an undeniable fact) ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ *in the whole habitable earth*, at least, in every place where any Christians made their abode. The annual fasts in our Church are, "The forty days of Lent, the Ember days at the four seasons, the Rogation days,

† Lev. xxiii. 26, &c. ‖ Zech. viii. 19.

days, and the Vigils or Eves of ſeveral ſolemn feſtivals: the weekly, all Fridays in the year, except Chriſtmas-day.

But beſides thoſe which were fixed, in every nation fearing God, there have always been occaſional faſts, appointed from time to time, as the particular circumſtances and occaſions of each required. So * when "the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, came againſt Jehoſhaphat to battle; Jehoſhaphat ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord, and proclaimed a faſt throughout all Judah." And ſo † "in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the ſon of Joſiah, in the ninth month," when they were afraid of the King of Babylon, the Princes of "Judah proclaimed a faſt before the Lord, to all the people of Jeruſalem."

And in like manner, particular perſons, who take heed unto their ways, and deſire to walk humbly and cloſely with God, will find frequent occaſion for private ſeaſons of thus afflicting their ſouls, before their Father which is in ſecret. And it is to this kind of faſting that the directions here given, do chiefly and primarily refer.

II. 1. I proceed to ſhew, in the ſecond place, What are the grounds, the reaſons and ends of Faſting.

And, firſt, men who are under ſtrong emotions of mind, who are affected with any vehement paſſion, ſuch as ſorrow or fear, are often ſwallowed up therein, and even *forget to eat their bread.* At ſuch ſeaſons they have little regard for food, not even what is needful to ſuſtain nature; much leſs for any delicacy or variety, being taken up with quite different thoughts. Thus

* 2 Chron. xx. 1. 3. † Jer. xxxvi. 9.

Thus when Saul ſaid, ‖ "I am ſore diſtreſt; for the Philiſtines make war againſt me, and God is departed from me; it is recorded, "He had eaten no bread, all the day nor all the night." Thus thoſe who were in the ſhip with St. Paul, "when no ſmall tempeſt lay upon them, and all hope that they ſhould be ſaved was taken away, * continued faſting, having taken nothing;" no regular meal, for fourteen days together. And thus "David and all the men that were with him, [when they heard that] the people were fled from the battle, and that many of the people were fallen dead, and Saul and Jonathan his ſon were dead alſo; † mourned and wept and faſted until even, for Saul and Jonathan and for the houſe of Iſrael."

Nay, many times they whoſe minds are deeply engaged, are impatient of any interruption, and even loath their needful food, as diverting their thoughts, from what they deſire ſhould engroſs their whole attention. Even as Saul, when on the occaſion mentioned before, he had "fallen all along upon the earth, and there was no ſtrength in him, yet, ſaid, I will not eat; till his ſervants, together with the woman compelled him."

2. Here then is the natural ground of Faſting. One who is under deep affliction, overwhelmed with ſorrow for ſin, and a ſtrong apprehenſion of the wrath of God, would without any rule, without knowing or conſidering, whether it were a command of God or not, *forget to eat his bread*, abſtain not only from pleaſant, but even from needful food. Like St. Paul, who after he was "led

‖ 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. 20. * Acts xxvii. 33. † 2 Sam. i. 12.

"led into Damascus, was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink," Acts ix. 9.

Yea, when the storm rose high, when *an horrible dread overwhelmed* one who had long been without God in the world; his soul would *loath all manner of meat;* it would be unpleasing and irksome to him. He would be impatient of any thing that should interrupt his ceaseless cry, *Lord, save! or I perish.*

How strongly is this impressed by our Church, in the first part of the Homily on Fasting?

"When men feel in themselves the heavy burthen of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell; they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied (taken up) partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathsomeness (or loathing) of all worldly things and pleasure cometh in place. So that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour of body to shew themselves weary of life."

3. Another reason or ground of Fasting is this. Many of those who now fear God, are deeply sensible how often they have sinned against him, by the abuse of these lawful things. They know, how much they have transgressed the holy law of God, with regard to temperance, if not sobriety too: how they have indulged their sen-

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ſual appetites, perhaps to their impairing even their bodily health; certainly to the no ſmall hurt of their ſoul. For hereby they continually fed and increaſed that ſprightly folly, that airineſs of mind, that levity of temper, that gay inattention to things of the deepeſt concern, that giddineſs and careleſſneſs of ſpirit, which were no other than drunkenneſs of ſoul, which ſtupified all their nobleſt faculties no leſs than exceſs of wine or ſtrong drink. To remove therefore the effect, they remove the cauſe: they keep at a diſtance from all exceſs. They abſtain, as far as is poſſible, from what had well nigh plunged them into everlaſting perdition. They often wholly refrain; always take care to be ſparing and temperate in all things.

4. They likewiſe well remember, how fulneſs of bread, increaſed not only careleſſneſs and levity of ſpirit, but alſo fooliſh and unholy deſires, yea, unclean and vile affections. And this experience puts beyond all doubt. Even a genteel, regular ſenſuality, is continually ſenſualizing the ſoul, and ſinking it into a level with the beaſts that periſh. It cannot be expreſſed what an effect variety and delicacy of food have on the mind as well as the body; making it juſt ripe for every pleaſure of ſenſe, as ſoon as opportunity ſhall invite. Therefore on this ground alſo every wiſe man will refrain his ſoul, and keep it low; will wean it more and more from all thoſe indulgences of the inferior appetites, which naturally tend to chain it down to the earth, and to pollute as well as debaſe it. Here is another perpetual reaſon for faſting: to remove the food of luſt and ſenſuality, to withdraw the incentives of fooliſh and hurtful deſires, of vile and vain affections.

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5. Perhaps we need not altogether omit, (although I know not if we ſhould do well, to lay any great ſtreſs upon it) another reaſon for faſting, which ſome good men have largely inſiſted on: namely, the puniſhing themſelves for having abuſed the good gifts of God, by ſome times wholly refraining from them: thus exerciſing a kind of holy revenge upon themſelves, for their paſt folly and ingratitude, in turning the things which ſhould have been for their health, into an occaſion of falling. They ſuppoſe David to have had an eye to this when he ſaid, *I wept and chaſtened*, or puniſhed, *my ſoul with faſting:* and St. Paul, when he mentioned *what revenge* godly ſorrow occaſioned in the Corinthians.

6. A fifth, and more weighty reaſon for faſting is, That it is an help to prayer: particularly, when we ſet apart larger portions of time for private prayer. Then eſpecially it is, that God is often pleaſed to lift up the ſouls of his ſervants, above all the things of earth, and ſome times to wrap them up, as it were, into the third heavens. And it is chiefly, as it is an help to prayer, that it has ſo frequently been found a means in the hand of God, of confirming and increaſing not one virtue, not chaſtity only, (as ſome have idly imagined, without any ground, either from Scripture, Reaſon or Experience) but alſo ſeriouſneſs of ſpirit, earneſtneſs, ſenſibility and tenderneſs of conſcience; deadneſs to the world, and conſequently the love of God and every holy and heavenly affection.

7. Not that there is any natural or neceſſary connexion, between faſting, and the bleſſings God conveys thereby. But he will have mercy *as* he will have mercy: he will convey whatſoever ſeem-

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eth him good, by whatſoever means he is pleaſed to appoint. And he hath in all ages appointed this, to be a means of averting his wrath, and obtaining whatever bleſſings we from time to time ſtand in need of.

How powerful a means this is, to avert the wrath of God, we may learn from the remarkable inſtance of Ahab. *There was none like* him, *who did not ſell himſelf;* wholly give himſelf up, like a ſlave bought with money, *to work wickedneſs.* Yet whenever he "rent his clothes and put ſack-cloth upon his fleſh, and faſted, and went ſoftly: the word of the Lord came to Elijah, ſaying, Seeſt thou how Ahab humbleth himſelf before me? Becauſe he humbleth himſelf before me, I will not bring evil in his days."

It was for this end, to avert the wrath of God, that Daniel ſought God, *with faſting and ſack-cloth and aſhes.* This appears from the whole tenor of his prayer, particularly from the ſolemn concluſion of it. "O Lord, according to all thy righteouſneſs [or mercies] let thy anger be turned away from thy holy mountain—Hear the prayer of thy ſervant, and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy ſanctuary that is deſolate.—O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive: O Lord, hearken and do, for thine own ſake," Dan. ix. 3. 16, &c.

8. But it is not only from the people of God that we learn, when his anger is moved, to ſeek him by faſting and prayer; but even from the Heathens. When Jonah had declared, "Yet forty days and Nineveh ſhall be deſtroyed, the people of Nineveh proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth from the greateſt of them unto the leaſt. For the King of Nineveh aroſe from his

throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with ſackcloth, and ſat in aſhes. And he cauſed it to be proclaimed and publiſhed through Nineveh, Let neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock, taſte any thing. Let them not feed, nor drink water." (Not that the beaſt had ſinned, or could repent; but that by their example man might be admoniſhed, conſidering that for his ſin, the anger of God was hanging over all creatures.) "Who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?"—And their labour was not in vain. The fierce anger of God was turned away from them. "God ſaw their works," (the fruits of that repentance and faith, which he had wrought in them by his Prophet;) and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid he would do unto them; and he did it not." Jonah iii. 4, &c.

9. And it is a means not only of turning away the wrath of God, but alſo of obtaining whatever bleſſings we ſtand in need of. So when the other tribes were ſmitten before the Benjamites, * "all the children of Iſrael went up unto the houſe of the Lord, and wept and faſted that day until even;" and then the Lord ſaid, "Go up again; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand." So Samuel † gathered all Iſrael together, when they were in bondage to the Philiſtines, "and they faſted on that day before the Lord: and when the Philiſtines drew near to battle againſt Iſrael, the Lord thundered upon them with a great thunder, and diſcomfited them, and they were ſmitten before Iſrael." So Ezra: "I § proclaimed a faſt at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourſelves before our God, to ſeek

* Judg. xx. 26, &c † 1 Sam. vii. 6, &c. § Ezra viii. 21.

ſeek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones—and he was entreated of us." So Nehemiah; "I * faſted and prayed before the God of heaven, and ſaid, Proſper, I pray thee, thy ſervant this day, and grant him mercy in the ſight of this man." And God granted him mercy in the ſight of the King.

10. In like manner, the Apoſtles always joined faſting with prayer, when they deſired the bleſſing of God on any important undertaking. Thus we read, Acts xiii. "There were in the Church that was at Antioch certain Prophets and Teachers—As they miniſtered to the Lord and faſted, [doubtleſs for direction in this very affair] the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had (a ſecond time) faſted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they ſent them away," ver. 1, 2, 3.

Thus alſo Paul and Barnabas themſelves, as we read in the following chapter, when they "returned again to Lyſtra, Iconium and Antioch, confirming the ſouls of the diſciples; and when they had ordained them Elders in every Church, and had prayed with faſting, commended them to the Lord," ver. 23.

Yea, that bleſſings, are to be obtained in the uſe of this means, which are no otherwiſe attainable, our Lord expreſsly declares in his anſwer to his diſciples aſking, "† Why could not we caſt him out? Jeſus ſaid unto them, Becauſe of your unbelief, for verily I ſay unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder

* Nehem. i. 4. 11. † Matt. xvii. 19, &c.

der place, and it ſhall remove, and nothing ſhall be impoſſible unto you. Howbeit, this kind (of devils) goeth not out, but by prayer and faſting:" theſe being the appointed means of attaining that faith, whereby the very devils are ſubject unto you.

11. Theſe were the *appointed* means. For it was not merely by the light of reaſon, or of natural conſcience, (as it is called) that the people of God have been in all ages directed, to uſe faſting as a means to theſe ends. But they have been from time to time taught it of God himſelf, by clear and open revelations of his will. Such is that remarkable one by the Prophet Joel, * "Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, Turn you unto me, with all your heart, and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning.—Who knoweth if the Lord will return and repent, and leave a bleſſing behind him? Blow the trumpet in Zion, ſanctify a faſt, call a ſolemn aſſembly—Then will the Lord be jealous over his land, and will ſpare his people. Yea, I will ſend you corn and wine and oil—I will no more make you a reproach among the Heathen."

Nor are they only temporal bleſſings which God directs his people to expect in the uſe of theſe means. For at the ſame time that he promiſed to thoſe who ſhould ſeek him with faſting, and weeping, and mourning, "I will render you the years which the graſhopper hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar and the palmer-worm, my great army," he ſubjoins, "So ſhall ye eat and be ſatisfied, and praiſe the name of the Lord your God.—Ye ſhall alſo know that I am in the midſt of Iſrael, and that I am the Lord

* Joel ii. 12, &c.

Lord your God." And then immediately follows the great gospel promise, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

12. Now whatsoever reasons there were to quicken those of old in the zealous and constant discharge of this duty, they are of equal force still to quicken us. But above all these we have a peculiar reason for being *in fastings often*, namely, the command of Him by whose name we are called. He does not indeed in this place *expressly* enjoin, either fasting, giving of alms, or prayer. But his directions how to fast, to give alms, and pray, are of the same force with such injunctions. For the commanding us, to do any thing *thus*, is an unquestionable command, to do that thing; seeing it is impossible to perform it *thus*, if it be not performed *at all*. Consequently, the saying, Give alms, pray, fast, in *such a manner*, is a clear command to perform all those duties: as well as to perform them in that *manner*, which shall in no wise lose its reward.

And this is a still farther motive and encouragement, to the performance of this duty; even the promise which our Lord has graciously annexed to the due discharge of it: "thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Such are the plain grounds, reasons, and ends of Fasting; such our encouragement to persevere therein, notwithstanding abundance of objections which men, wiser than their Lord, have been continually raising against it.

III. 1. The moſt plauſible of theſe I come now to conſider. And, firſt, It has been frequently ſaid, "Let a Chriſtian faſt from ſin, and not from food: this is what God requires at his hands." So he does: but he requires the other alſo. Therefore this ought to be done, and that not left undone.

View your argument in its full dimenſions; and you will eaſily judge of the ſtrength of it.

"If a chriſtian ought to abſtain from ſin, then he ought not to abſtain from food:

"But a Chriſtian ought to abſtain from ſin:

"Therefore he ought not to abſtain from food."

That a Chriſtian ought to abſtain from ſin, is moſt true. But how does it follow from hence, that he ought not to abſtain from food? Yea, let him do both the one and the other. Let him, by the grace of God, always abſtain from ſin; and let him often abſtain from food; for ſuch reaſons and ends as Experience and Scripture plainly ſhews to be anſwered thereby.

2. "But is it not better (as it has, ſecondly, been objected) to abſtain from pride and vanity, from fooliſh and hurtful deſires, from peeviſhneſs, and anger, and diſcontent, than from food?" Without queſtion it is. But here again we have need to remind you of our Lord's words, "Theſe things ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone." And indeed the latter is only in order to the former; it is a means to that great end. We abſtain from food with this view, that by the grace of God, conveyed into our ſouls, through this outward means, in conjunction with all the other channels of his grace which he hath appointed, we may be enabled to abſtain from every

every paſſion and temper, which is not pleaſing in his ſight. We refrain from the one, that being endued with power from on high, we may be able to refrain from the other. So that your argument proves juſt the contrary to what you deſigned. It proves, that we ought to faſt. For if we ought to abſtain from evil tempers and deſires, then we ought thus to abſtain from food: ſince theſe little inſtances of ſelf-denial are the ways God hath choſe, wherein to beſtow that great ſalvation.

3. "But we do not find it ſo in fact: (this is a third objection.) We have faſted much and often. But what did it avail? We were not a whit better: we found no bleſſing therein. Nay, we have found it an hinderance rather than an help. Inſtead of preventing anger, for inſtance, or fretfulneſs, it has been a means of increaſing them to ſuch a height, that we could neither bear others nor ourſelves." This may very poſſibly be the caſe. It is poſſible, either to faſt or pray, in ſuch a manner, as to make you much worſe than before; more unhappy, and more unholy. Yet the fault does not lie in the means itſelf; but in the *manner* of uſing it. Uſe it ſtill, but uſe it in a different manner. Do what God commands *as* he commands it, and then doubtleſs his promiſe ſhall not fail; his bleſſing ſhall be withheld no longer: but "when thou faſteſt in ſecret, he that ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly."

4. "But is it not mere ſuperſtition, (ſo it has been, fourthly, objected,) to imagine that God regards ſuch little things as theſe?" If you ſay it is, you condemn all the generations of God's children. But will you ſay, These were all weak, ſuperſtitious men? Can you be ſo hardy as to affirm

firm this, both of Moſes and Joſhua, of Samuel and David, of Jehoſhaphat, Ezra, Nehemiah, and all the Prophets? Yea, of a greater than all, the Son of God himſelf? It is certain, both our Maſter, and all theſe his ſervants, did imagine, That faſting is not a little thing, and that he who is higher than the higheſt doth regard it. Of the ſame judgment, it is plain, were all his Apoſtles, after they were "filled with the Holy Ghoſt and with wiſdom." When they had *the unction of the Holy One, teaching* them *all things*, they ſtill *approved themſelves the Miniſters of God, by faſting*, as well as *by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right-hand and on the left*. After "the bridegroom was taken from them, then did they faſt in thoſe days." Nor would they attempt any thing, (as we have ſeen above) wherein the glory of God was nearly concerned, ſuch as the ſending forth labourers into the harveſt, without ſolemn faſting as well as prayer.

5. "But if faſting be indeed of ſo great importance, and attended with ſuch a bleſſing, is it not beſt, (ſay ſome, fifthly,) to faſt always? Not to do it now and then, but to keep a continual faſt? To uſe as much abſtinence at all times, as our bodily ſtrength will bear?" Let none be diſcouraged from doing this. By all means uſe as little and plain food, exerciſe as much ſelf-denial herein at all times, as your bodily ſtrength will bear. And this may conduce, by the bleſſing of God, to ſeveral of the great ends above-mentioned. It may be a conſiderable help not only to chaſtity, but alſo to heavenly-mindedneſs; to the weaning your affections from things below, and ſetting them on things above. But this is not faſting, ſcriptural faſting, it is never termed ſo in all the Bible.

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It in ſome meaſure anſwers ſome of the ends thereof; but ſtill it is another thing. Practiſe it by all means; but not ſo as thereby to ſet aſide a command of God, and an inſtituted means of averting his judgments, and obtaining the bleſſings of his children.

6. Uſe continually then as much abſtinence as you pleaſe; which taken thus, is no other than Chriſtian temperance. But this need not at all interfere with your obſerving ſolemn times of faſting and prayer. For inſtance; your habitual abſtinence or temperance, would not prevent your faſting in ſecret, if you was ſuddenly overwhelmed with huge ſorrow and remorſe, and with horrible fear and diſmay. Such a ſituation of mind would almoſt conſtrain you to faſt: you would loath your dainty food: you would ſcarce endure even to take ſuch ſupplies, as were needful for the body, till God "lifted you up out of the horrible pit, and ſet your feet upon a rock, and ordered your goings." The ſame would be the caſe if you was in agony of deſire, vehemently wreſtling with God for his bleſſing. You would need none to inſtruct you, not to eat bread, till you had obtained the requeſt of your lips.

7. Again, had you been at Nineveh, when it was proclaimed throughout the city, "Let neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock taſte any thing: let them not feed or drink water, but let them cry mightily unto God:" would your continual faſt have been any reaſon for not bearing part in that general humiliation? Doubtleſs it would not. You would have been as much concerned as any other not to taſte food on that day.

No more would abſtinence, or the obſerving a continual

continual faſt, have excuſed any of the children of Iſrael, from faſting on the tenth day of the ſeventh month, the great annual day of atonement. There was no exception for theſe in that ſolemn decree, "Whatſoever ſoul it ſhall be, that ſhall not be afflicted (ſhall not faſt) in that day, he ſhall be cut off from among his people."

Laſtly, Had you been with the brethren in Antioch at the time when they faſted and prayed, before the ſending forth of Barnabas and Saul, can you poſſibly imagine that your temperance or abſtinence would have been a ſufficient cauſe for not joining therein? Without doubt, if you had not, you would ſoon have been cut off from the Chriſtian community. You would have deſervedly been caſt out from among them, "as bringing confuſion into the church of God."

IV. 1. I am in the laſt place, to ſhew, In what manner we are to faſt that it may be an acceptable ſervice unto the Lord. And, firſt, Let it be done *unto the Lord*, with our eye ſingly fixed on him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, To glorify our Father which is in heaven: to expreſs our ſorrow and ſhame, for our manifold tranſgreſſions of his holy law: to wait for an increaſe of purifying grace, drawing our affections to things above: to add ſerioufneſs and earneſtneſs to our prayers: to avert the wrath of God, and to obtain all the great and precious promiſes, which he hath made to us in Chriſt Jeſus.

Let us beware of mocking God, of turning our faſt as well as our prayers into an abomination unto the Lord, by the mixture of any temporal view,

view, particularly by seeking the praise of men. Against this our blessed Lord more peculiarly guards us, in the words of the text. "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, [such were too many who were called the people of God,] of a sad countenance;" sour, affectedly sad, putting their looks into a peculiar form. "For they disfigure their faces," not only by unnatural distortions, but also by covering them with dust and ashes.—"That they may appear unto men to fast;" This is their chief, if not only design. "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward; even the admiration and praise of men. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face." Do as thou art accustomed to do at other times—"That thou appear not unto men to fast," (let this be no part of thy intention: if they know it without any desire of thine, it matters not, thou art neither the better nor the worse) "but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

2. But if we desire this reward, let us beware, secondly, of fancying, we *merit* any thing of God by our fasting. We cannot be too often warned of this; insomuch as a desire to *establish our own righteousness*, to procure salvation of *debt* and not of *grace*, is so deeply rooted in all our hearts:—fasting is only a way which God hath ordained, wherein we wait for his *unmerited* mercy; and wherein, without any desert of ours, he hath promised, *freely* to give us his blessing.

3. Not that we are to imagine the performing the bare outward act, will receive any blessing from God. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen, saith

faith the Lord: a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?" Are these outward acts, however strictly performed, all that is meant by a man's "afflicting his soul? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" No surely. If it be a mere external service, it is all but lost labour. Such a performance may possibly afflict the body. But as to the soul, it profiteth nothing.

4. Yea, the body may sometimes be afflicted too much, so as to be unfit for the works of our calling. This also we are diligently to guard against: for we ought to preserve our health, as a good gift of God. Therefore care is to be taken, whenever we fast, to proportion the fast to our strength. For we may not offer God murder for sacrifice, or destroy our bodies to help our souls.

But at these solemn seasons, we may even in great weakness of body, avoid that other extreme, for which God condemns those who of old expostulated with him for not accepting their fasts. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?—Behold in the day of your fast you had pleasure, saith the Lord.*—If we cannot wholly abstain, we may at least abstain from pleasant food; and then we shall not seek his face in vain.

5. But let us take care to afflict our souls as well as our bodies. Let every season either of public or private fasting, be a season of exercising all those holy affections, which are implied in a broken and contrite heart. Let it be a season of devout mourning, of godly sorrow for sin:

fin: fuch a forrow as that of the Corinthians, concerning which the Apoſtle ſaith, "I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry, but that ye ſorrowed to repentance. For ye were made ſorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing." *For godly ſorrow* (ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη) the ſorrow which is according to God, which is a precious gift of his Spirit, lifting the ſoul to God from whom it flows) *worketh repentance to ſalvation, not to be repented of.* Yea, and let our ſorrowing after a godly ſort, work in us the ſame inward and outward repentance; the ſame entire change of heart, renewed after the image of God, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and the ſame change of life, till we are holy as he is holy in all manner of converſation. Let it work in us the ſame *carefulneſs*, to be found in him, without ſpot and blameleſs; the ſame *clearing of ourſelves*, by our lives rather than words, by our abſtaining from all appearance of evil; the ſame *indignation*, vehement abhorrence of every ſin; the ſame *fear* of our own deceitful hearts: the ſame *deſire* to be in all things conformed to the holy and acceptable will of God; the ſame *zeal* for whatever may be a means of his glory, and of our growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: and the ſame *revenge* againſt Satan and all his works, againſt all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit. 2 Cor. vii. 9, &c.

6. And with faſting let us always join fervent prayer, pouring out our whole ſouls before God, confeſſing our ſins with all their aggravations, humbling ourſelves under his mighty hand, laying open before him all our wants, all our guiltineſs and helpleſſneſs. This is a ſeaſon for en-

larging our prayers, both in behalf of ourſelves and of our brethren. Let us now bewail the ſins of our people, and cry aloud for the city of our God: that the Lord may build up Zion, and cauſe his face to ſhine on her deſolations. Thus we may obſerve, the men of God in ancient times, always joined prayer and faſting together. Thus the Apoſtles in all the inſtances cited above: and thus our Lord joins them in the diſcourſe before us.

7. It remains only, in order to our obſerving ſuch a faſt as is acceptable to the Lord, that we add alms thereto; works of mercy, after our power, both to the bodies and ſouls of men. "With ſuch ſacrifices alſo God is well pleaſed." Thus the angel declares to Cornelius, faſting and * praying in his houſe, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." And this God himſelf expreſsly and largely declares, † "Is not this the faſt that I have choſen? To looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy houſe? When thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyſelf from thy own fleſh? Then ſhall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily: and thy righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee: the glory of the Lord ſhall be thy rereward. Then ſhalt thou call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer: thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, Here I am.—If [when thou faſteſt] thou draw out

* Acts x. 4, &c. † Iſaiah lviii. 6, &c.

out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul: then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, and thy darkneſs be as the noon-day. And the Lord ſhall guide thee continually, and ſatisfy thy ſoul in drought, and make thy bones fat: and thou ſhall be like a watered garden, and like a ſpring of water whoſe waters fail not."

SERMON XXVII.

DISCOURSE the EIGHTH, on our LORD'S SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VI. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal:
But lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal:
For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.
The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light.
But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light that is within thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!

1. FROM thoſe which are commonly termed religious actions, and which are real branches of true religion, where they ſpring from a pure and holy intention, and are performed in a manner ſuitable thereto, our Lord proceeds

ceeds to the actions of *common life*, and shews that the same purity of intention, is as indispensably required in our ordinary business, as in giving alms, or fasting, or prayer.

And without question the same purity of intention, "which makes our alms and devotions acceptable, must also make our labour or employment, a proper offering to God. If a man pursues his business, that he may raise himself to a state of figure and riches in the world, he is no longer serving God in his employment, and has no more title to a reward from God, than he who gives alms that he may be *seen*, or prays that he may be *heard* of men. For vain and earthly designs are no more allowable in our employments, than in our alms and devotions. They are not only evil when they mix with our good works," with our religious actions, "but they have the same evil nature when they enter into the common business of our employments. If it were allowable to pursue them in our worldly employments, it would be allowable to pursue them in our devotions. But as our alms and devotions are not acceptable service, but when they proceed from a pure intention, so our common employment cannot be reckoned a service to him, but when it is performed with the same piety of heart."

2. This our blessed Lord declares in the liveliest manner, in those strong and comprehensive words which he explains, enforces and enlarges upon, throughout this whole chapter. "The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The eye is the in-

tention: what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the ſoul. As the one guides all the motions of the body, ſo does the other thoſe of the ſoul. This eye of the ſoul is then ſaid to be *ſingle*, when it looks at one thing only; when we have no other deſign, but to *know God*, and *Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent:* to know him with ſuitable affections, loving him as he hath loved us: to pleaſe God in all things: to ſerve God (as we love him) with all our heart and mind and ſoul and ſtrength: and to enjoy God in all and above all things, in time and in eternity.

3. *If thine eye be* thus *ſingle*, thus fixed on God, *thy whole body ſhall be full of light. Thy whole body.*—All that is guided by the intention, as the body is by the eye. All thou art: all thou doſt: thy deſires, tempers, affections; thy thoughts, and words, and actions. The whole of theſe *ſhall be full of light:* full of true divine knowledge. This is the firſt thing we may here underſtand by light. *In his light thou ſhalt ſee light. He who* of old *commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhall ſhine in thy heart.* He ſhall enlighten the eyes of thy underſtanding, with the knowledge of the glory of God. His Spirit ſhall reveal unto thee the deep things of God. The inſpiration of the Holy One ſhall give thee underſtanding, and cauſe thee to know wiſdom ſecretly. Yea, *the anointing* which thou receiveſt of him, *ſhall abide in thee and teach thee of all things.*

How does experience confirm this? Even after God hath opened the eyes of our underſtanding, if we ſeek or deſire any thing elſe than God, how ſoon is our fooliſh heart darkened? Then clouds

again

again reſt upon our ſouls. Doubts and fears again overwhelm us. We are toſſed to and fro, and know not what to do, or which is the path wherein we ſhould go. But when we deſire and ſeek nothing but God, clouds and doubts vaniſh away. We "who were ſometimes darkneſs, are now light in the Lord." The night now ſhineth as the day; and we find *the path of the upright is light.* God ſheweth us the path wherein we ſhould go, and *maketh plain the way before our face.*

4. The ſecond thing which we may here underſtand by *light*, is holineſs. While thou ſeekeſt God in all things, thou ſhalt find him in all, the fountain of all holineſs, continually filling thee with his own likeneſs, with juſtice, mercy and truth. While thou lookeſt unto Jeſus and him alone, thou ſhalt be filled with the mind that was in him. Thy ſoul ſhall be renewed day by day, after the image of God that created it. If the eye of thy mind be not removed from him, if thou endureſt *ſeeing him that is inviſible*, and ſeeking nothing elſe in heaven or earth, then as thou beholdeſt the glory of the Lord, "thou ſhalt be transformed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord."

And it is alſo matter of daily experience, that *by grace we are* thus *ſaved through faith.* It is by faith that the eye of the mind is opened, to ſee the light of the glorious love of God. And as long as it is ſteadily fixed thereon, on God in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, we are more and more filled with the love of God and man, with meekneſs, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering; with all the fruits of holineſs which are through Chriſt Jeſus to the glory of God the Father.

5. This

5. This light which fills him who has a single eye, implies, thirdly, Happiness as well as holiness. Surely "light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to see the sun." But how much more to see the Sun of righteousness, continually shining upon the soul? And if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any peace that passeth all understanding, if any rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, they all belong to him whose eye is single. Thus is his *whole body full of light.* He walketh in the light as God is in the light, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks, *enjoying* whatever is the will of God concerning him in Christ Jesus.

6. "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." *If thine eye be evil:* we see there is no medium between a single and an evil eye. If the eye be not single, then it is evil. If the intention, in whatever we do, be not singly to God, if we seek any thing else, then our *mind and conscience are defiled.*

Our eye therefore is evil, if in any thing we do, we aim at any other end than God; if we have any view, but to know and to love God, please and serve him in all things: if we have any other design than to enjoy God, to be happy in him both now and for ever.

7. If thine eye be not singly fixed on God, *thy whole body shall be full of darkness.* The veil shall still remain on thy heart. Thy mind shall be more and more blinded, by *the god of this world, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon thee.* Thou wilt be full of ignorance and error touching the things of God, not being able to receive or discern them.

And

And even when thou haſt ſome deſire to ſerve God, thou wilt be full of uncertainty as to the manner of ſerving him; finding doubts and difficulties on every ſide, and not ſeeing any way to eſcape.

Yea, if thine eye be not ſingle, if thou ſeek any of the things of earth, thou ſhalt be full of ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs: thy deſires, tempers, affections, being all out of courſe, being all dark, and vile, and vain. And thy converſation will be evil, as well as thy heart, not *ſeaſoned with ſalt*, or *meet to miniſter grace unto the hearers*, but idle, unprofitable, corrupt, grievous to the holy Spirit of God.

8. Both *deſtruction and unhappineſs are in thy ways*; for *the way of peace haſt* thou *not known*. There is no peace, no ſettled, ſolid peace, for them that know not God. There is no true, nor laſting content for any, who do not ſeek him with their whole heart. While thou aimeſt at any of the things that periſh, *all that cometh is vanity*. Yea, not only vanity, but *vexation of ſpirit*, and that both in the purſuit and the enjoyment alſo. Thou walkeſt indeed in a vain ſhadow, and diſquieteſt thyſelf in vain. Thou walkeſt in darkneſs that may be felt. *Sleep on*; but thou canſt not *take thy reſt*. The dreams of life can give pain, and that thou knoweſt: but eaſe they cannot give. There is no reſt in this world or the world to come, but only in God, the centre of ſpirits.

If the light which is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs! If the intention which ought to enlighten the whole ſoul, to fill it with knowledge and love and peace, and which in fact, does ſo as long as it is ſingle, as long as it aims

aims at God alone: if this be darkneſs; if it aims at any thing beſide God, and conſequently cover the ſoul with darkneſs, inſtead of light, with ignorance and error, with ſin and miſery: O how great is that darkneſs! It is the very ſmoke which aſcends out of the bottomleſs pit! It is the eſſential night, which reigns in the loweſt deep, in the land of the ſhadow of death.

9. Therefore "lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal." If you do, it is plain your eye is evil: it is not ſingly fixed on God.

With regard to moſt of the commandments of God, whether relating to the heart or life, the Heathens of *Afric* or *America* ſtand much on a level, with thoſe that are called Chriſtians. The Chriſtians obſerve them (a few only being excepted) very near as much as the Heathens. For inſtance: The generality of the natives of *England*, commonly called Chriſtians, are as ſober and as temperate, as the generality of the Heathens, near the *Cape of Good Hope*. And ſo the Dutch or French Chriſtians, are as humble and as chaſte, as the *Choctaw* or *Cherokee* Indians. It is not eaſy to ſay, when we compare the bulk of the nations in *Europe*, with thoſe in *America*, whether the ſuperiority lies on the one ſide or the other. At leaſt, the American has not much the advantage. But we cannot affirm this, with regard to the command now before us. Here the Heathen has far the pre-eminence. He deſires and ſeeks nothing more than plain food to eat, and plain raiment to put on. And he ſeeks this only from day to day. He reſerves, he lays up

up nothing; unleſs it be, as much corn at one ſeaſon of the year, as he will need before that ſeaſon returns. This command, therefore, the Heathens, though they know it not, do conſtantly and punctually obſerve. They *lay up for themſelves no treaſures upon earth;* no ſtores of purple or fine linen, of gold or ſilver, which either *moth or ruſt may corrupt*, or *thieves break through and ſteal.* But how do the Chriſtians obſerve, what they profeſs to receive as a command of the moſt high God? Not at all; not in any degree; no more than if no ſuch command had ever been given to man. Even the good Chriſtians, as they are accounted by others as well as themſelves, pay no manner of regard thereto. It might as well be ſtill hid in its original Greek for any notice they take of it. In what Chriſtian city do you find one man of five hundred, who makes the leaſt ſcruple of laying up juſt as much treaſure as he can? Of increaſing his goods juſt as far as he is able? There are indeed thoſe who would not do this unjuſtly; there are many who will neither rob or ſteal: and ſome, who will not defraud his neighbour; nay, who will not gain, either by his ignorance or neceſſity. But this is quite another point. Even theſe do not ſcruple the thing but the manner of it. They do not ſcruple the *laying up treaſures upon earth;* but the laying them up by diſhoneſty. They do not ſtart at diſobeying Chriſt, but at a breach of Heathen morality. So that even theſe honeſt men do no more obey this command, than a highwayman or a houſe-breaker. Nay, they never deſigned to obey it. From their youth up, it never entered into their thoughts. They were bred up by their

Chriſtian

Christian parents, masters, and friends, without any instruction at all concerning it: unless it were this, To break it as soon, and as much as they could, and to continue breaking it to their live's end.

10. There is no one instance of spiritual infatuation in the world, which is more amazing than this. Most of these very men read, or hear the Bible read, many of them every Lord's-day. They have read or heard these words an hundred times, and yet never suspect that they are themselves condemned thereby, any more than by those which forbid parents to offer up their sons or daughters unto Moloch.

O that God would speak to these miserable self-deceivers, with his own voice, his mighty voice! That they may at last awake out of the snare of the devil, and the scales may fall from their eyes!

11. Do you ask, what it is to lay *up treasures on earth?* It will be needful to examine this thoroughly. And let us, first, observe, what is not forbidden in this command, that we may then clearly discern, what is.

We are not forbidden in this command, first, to "provide things honest in the sight of all men," to provide wherewith we may *render unto all their due*, whatsoever they can justly demand of us. So far from it, that we are taught of God, to *owe no man any thing*. We ought therefore to use all diligence in our calling, in order to owe no man any thing: this being no other than a plain law of common justice, which our Lord came *not to destroy but to fulfil*.

Neither, secondly, does he here forbid the providing for ourselves, such things as are needful for the body; a sufficiency of plain, wholesome

food to eat, and clean raiment to put on. Yea, it is our duty, so far as God puts it into our power, to provide these things also; to the end we may *eat our own bread*, and be *burdensome to no man*.

Nor yet are we forbidden, thirdly, to provide for our children, and for those of our own household. This also it is our duty to do, even upon principles of heathen morality. Every man ought to provide the plain necessaries of life, both for his own wife and children; and to put them into a capacity of providing these for themselves, when he is gone hence and is no more seen. I say, of providing *these*, the plain necessaries of life, not delicacies, not superfluities: and that by their *diligent labour*; for it is no man's duty to furnish them any more than himself, with the means either of luxury or idleness. But if any man provide not thus far for his own children, (as well as for *the widows of his own house*; of whom primarily St. Paul is speaking, in those well known words to Timothy:) *He hath* practically *denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*, or heathen.

Lastly, We are not forbidden in these words, to lay up from time to time, what is needful for the carrying on our worldly business, in such a measure and degree, as is sufficient to answer the foregoing purposes: in such a measure, as first, to owe no man any thing; secondly, to procure for ourselves the necessaries of life; and thirdly, to furnish those of our own house with them while we live, and with the means of procuring them when we are gone to God.

12. We may now clearly discern (unless we are unwilling to discern it) what that is which is forbidden here. It is, The designedly procuring more of this world's goods, than will answer the

foregoing purpoſes: the labouring after a larger meaſure of worldly ſubſtance, a larger increaſe of gold and ſilver; the laying up any more than theſe ends require, is what is here expreſsly and abſolutely forbidden. If the words have any meaning at all, it muſt be this; for they are capable of no other. Conſequently, whoever he is, that owing no man any thing, and having food and raiment for himſelf and his houſehold, together with a ſufficiency to carry on his worldly buſineſs, ſo far as anſwers theſe reaſonable purpoſes: whoever, I ſay, being already in theſe circumſtances, ſeeks a ſtill larger portion on earth, he lives in an open habitual denial of the Lord that bought him. He hath practically *denied the faith, and is worſe than an* African or American *infidel.*

13. Hear ye this, all ye that dwell in the world, and love the world wherein ye dwell. Ye may be *highly eſteemed of men;* but ye are *an abomination in the ſight of God.* How long ſhall your ſouls cleave to the duſt? How long will ye load yourſelves with thick clay? When will ye awake and ſee, that the open, ſpeculative Heathens are nearer the kingdom of heaven than you? When will ye be perſuaded to chuſe the better part; that which cannot be taken away from you? When will ye ſeek only to *lay up treaſures in heaven,* renouncing, dreading, abhorring all other? If you aim at *laying up treaſures on earth,* you are not barely loſing your time, and ſpending your ſtrength for that which is not bread: for what is the fruit if you ſucceed? You have murdered your own ſoul. You have extinguiſhed the laſt ſpark of ſpiritual life therein. Now indeed, in the midſt of life you are in death. You are a living man, but a dead Chriſtian. "For where your treaſure is there will your heart be alſo." Your heart is ſunk into the duſt

duſt: your ſoul cleaveth to the ground. Your affections are ſet, not on things above, but on things of the earth; on poor huſks that may poiſon, but cannot ſatisfy an everlaſting ſpirit, made for God. Your love, your joy, your deſire are all placed on the things which periſh in the uſing. You have thrown away the treaſure in heaven: God and Chriſt are loſt. You have gained riches and hell fire.

14. "O how hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" When our Lord's diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his ſpeaking thus, he was ſo far from retracting it that he repeated the ſame important truth, in ſtronger terms than before. "It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." How hard it is for them whoſe every word is applauded, not to be wiſe in their own eyes! How hard for them not to think themſelves better than the poor, baſe, uneducated herd of men! How hard not to ſeek happineſs in their riches, or in things dependent upon them; in gratifying the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eye, or the pride of life! O ye rich, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?—Only with God all things are poſſible.

15. And even if you do not ſucceed, what is the fruit of your *endeavouring* to lay up treaſures on earth? *They that will be rich* (ὰι βυλόμενοι πλυτεῖν, they that deſire, that endeavour after it, whether they ſucceed or no) *fall into a temptation, and a ſnare*, a gin, a trap of the devil, *and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts*; ἐπιθυμὶας ἀνοητες, deſires with which reaſon hath nothing to do; ſuch as properly belong, not to rational and immortal be-

ings, but only to the brute-beasts, which have no understanding: *which drown men in destruction and perdition*, in present and eternal misery. Let us but open our eyes, and we may daily see the melancholy proofs of this: men, who desiring, resolving to be rich, *coveting after money, the root of all evil, have* already *pierced themselves through with many sorrows*, and anticipated the hell to which they are going.

The cautiousness with which the Apostle here speaks, is highly observable. He does not affirm this absolutely of *the rich*; for a man may possibly be rich, without any fault of his, by an overruling Providence, preventing his own choice. But he affirms it of βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν, *Those who desire* or seek *to be rich*. Riches, dangerous as they are, do not always *drown men in destruction and perdition*. But the *desire of riches* does: those who calmly desire and deliberately seek to attain them, whether they do, in fact, gain the world or no, do infallibly lose their own souls. These are they, that sell him who bought them with his blood, for a few pieces of gold or silver. These enter into a covenant with death and hell: and their covenant shall stand. For they are daily making themselves meet to partake of their inheritance with the devil and his angels.

16. O who shall warn this generation of vipers, to flee from the wrath to come! Not those who lie at their gate or cringe at their feet, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fall from their tables. Not those who court their favour or fear their frown; none of those who mind earthly things. But if there be a Christian upon earth, if there be a man who hath overcome the world, who desires nothing but God, and fears none

none but him that is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell: thou, O Man of God, ſpeak and ſpare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet. Cry aloud and ſhew theſe honourable ſinners the deſperate condition wherein they ſtand. It may be, one in a thouſand may have ears to hear, may ariſe and ſhake himſelf from the duſt; may break looſe from theſe chains that bind him to the earth, and at length lay up treaſures in heaven.

17. And if it ſhould be, that one of theſe, by the mighty power of God, awoke and aſked, What muſt I do to be ſaved? The anſwer, according to the Oracles of God, is clear, full and expreſs. God doth not ſay to thee, *Sell all that thou haſt.* Indeed he who ſeeth the hearts of men, ſaw it needful to enjoin this in one peculiar caſe, that of the *young rich Ruler.* But he never laid it down for a general rule, to all rich men, in all ſucceeding generations. His general direction is, firſt, *Be not high-minded.* God ſeeth not as man ſeeth. He eſteems thee not for thy riches, for thy grandeur or equipage, for any qualification or accompliſhment, which is directly or indirectly owing to thy wealth, which can be bought, or procured thereby. All theſe are with him as dung and droſs: let them be ſo with thee alſo. Beware thou think not thyſelf to be one jot wiſer or better for all theſe things. Weigh thyſelf in another balance; eſtimate thyſelf only by the meaſure of faith and love which God hath given thee. If thou haſt more of the knowledge and love of God than he, thou art on this account and no other, wiſer and better, more valuable and honourable than Him, who is with the dogs of thy flock. But if thou haſt not this treaſure, thou art more fooliſh, more vile, more

truly contemptible, I will not say, than the lowest servant under thy roof, but than the beggar laid at thy gate, full of sores.

18. Secondly, *Trust not in uncertain riches.* Trust not in them for help: and trust not in them for happiness.

First, Trust not in them for help. Thou art miserably mistaken, if thou lookest for this in gold or silver. These are no more able to set thee *above the world*, than to set thee above the devil. Know that both the world and the prince of this world laugh at all such preparations against them. These will little avail in the day of trouble: even if they remain in the trying hour. But it is not certain, that they will: for how oft do they *make themselves wings and fly away!* But if not, what support will they afford, even in the ordinary troubles of life? The desire of thy eyes, the wife of thy youth, thy son, thine only son, or the friend which was as thy own soul, is taken away at a stroke. Will thy riches re-animate the breathless clay, or call back its late inhabitant?—Will they secure thee from sickness, diseases, pain? Do these visit the poor only? Nay: he that feeds thy flocks or tills thy ground, has less sickness and pain than thou. He is more rarely visited by these unwelcome guests: and if they come there at all, they are more easily driven away from the little cot, than from "the cloud-topt palaces." And during the time that thy body is chastened with pain, or consumes away with pining sickness, how do thy treasures help thee? Let the poor Heathen answer.

Ut lippum pictæ tabulæ, fomenta podagrum,
Auriculas citharæ collecta sorde dolentes.

19. But

19. But there is at hand a greater trouble than all theſe. *Thou* art to die. *Thou* art to ſink into duſt; to return to the ground from which thou waſt taken, to mix with common clay. *Thy* body is to go to the earth as it was, while thy ſpirit returns to God that gave it. And the time draws on: the years ſlide away with a ſwift though ſilent pace. Perhaps your day is far ſpent: the noon of life is paſt, and the evening ſhadows begin to reſt upon you. You feel in yourſelves ſure approaching decay. The ſprings of life wear away apace. Now what help in your riches? Do they ſweeten death? Do they endear that ſolemn hour? Quite the reverſe. "O death how bitter art thou, to a man that liveth at reſt in his poſſeſſions?" How unacceptable to him is that awful ſentence, "This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee!"—Or will they prevent the unwelcome ſtroke, or protract the dreadful hour? Can they deliver your ſoul that it ſhould not ſee death? Can they reſtore the years that are paſt? Can they add to your appointed time, a month, a day, an hour, a moment?—Or will the good things you have choſen for your portion here, follow you over the great gulph? Not ſo: naked came you into this world; and naked muſt you return.

Linquenda tellus, & domus & placens
Uxor: nec harum quas ſeris arborum
Te præter inviſam cupreſſum,
Ulla brevem dominum ſequetur.

Surely were not theſe truths too plain to be *obſerved*, becauſe they are too plain to be *denied*, no man that is to die could poſſibly *truſt*, for help, *in uncertain riches*.

20. And

20. And truſt not in them for happineſs. For here alſo they will be found *deceitful upon the weights.* Indeed this every reaſonable man may infer, from what has been obſerved already. For if neither thouſands of gold and ſilver, nor any of the advantages or pleaſures purchaſed thereby, can prevent our being miſerable, it evidently follows, they cannot make us happy. What happineſs can they afford to him, who in the midſt of all is conſtrained to cry out,

To my new Courts ſad Thought does ſtill repair;
And round my gilded Roof hangs hovering Care.

Indeed experience is here ſo full, ſtrong, and undeniable, that it makes all other arguments needleſs. Appeal we therefore to fact. Are the rich and great, the only happy men? And is each of them more or leſs happy, in proportion to his meaſure of riches? Are they happy at all? I had well nigh ſaid, they are of all men moſt miſerable! Rich man, for once, ſpeak the truth from thy heart, Speak, both for thyſelf, and for thy brethren.

> "Amidſt our plenty ſomething ſtill—
> To me, to thee, to him is wanting!
> That cruel ſomething unpoſſeſt
> Corrodes and leavens all the reſt."

Yea, and ſo it will, till thy wearifome days of vanity are ſhut up in the night of death.

Surely then to truſt in riches for happineſs, is the greateſt folly of all that are under the ſun! Are you not convinced of this? Is it poſſible you ſhould ſtill expect to find happineſs in money, or all it can procure? What! Can ſilver and gold, eating and drinking, and horſes and ſervants,

ſervants, and glittering apparel, and diverſions and pleaſures (as they are called) make thee happy? They can as ſoon make thee immortal.

21. Theſe are all dead ſhow. Regard them not. *Truſt* thou *in the living God.* So ſhalt thou be ſafe under the ſhadow of the Almighty; his faithfulneſs and truth ſhall be thy ſhield and buckler. He is a very preſent help in time of trouble; ſuch an help as can never fail. Then ſhalt thou ſay, if all thy other friends die, "The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my ſtrong helper!" He ſhall remember thee when thou lieſt ſick upon thy bed: when vain is the help of man, when all the things of the earth can give no ſupport, he will "*make all thy bed in thy ſickneſs.*" He will ſweeten thy pain; the conſolations of God ſhall cauſe thee to clap thy hands in the flames. And even when this houſe of earth is well nigh ſhaken down, when it is juſt ready to drop into the duſt, he will teach thee to ſay, "O death where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth me the victory, through my Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

O truſt in him for happineſs as well as for help. All the ſprings of happineſs are in him. Truſt *in him who giveth us all things richly to enjoy,* παρέχοντι πλουσίως πάντα εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν. Who of his own rich and free mercy, holds them out to us, as in his own hand, that receiving them as his gift and as pledges of his love, we may *enjoy all* that we poſſeſs. It is his love gives a reliſh to all we taſte, puts life and ſweetneſs into all, while every creature leads us up to the great Creator, and all earth is a ſcale to heaven. He transfuſes the joys that are at his own right hand, into all he beſtows on his thankful children: who having

fellowſhip

fellowſhip with the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, enjoy him in all and above all.

22. Thirdly, Seek not to *increaſe in goods.* "Lay not up for thyſelf treaſures upon earth." This is a flat, poſitive command, full as clear, as "Thou ſhalt not commit adultery." How then is it poſſible for a rich man to grow richer, without denying the Lord that bought him? Yea, how can any man, who has already the neceſſaries of life, gain or aim at more, and be guiltleſs? "Lay not up, (ſaith our Lord,) treaſures upon earth." If in ſpite of this, you do and will lay up, money or goods, what "moth or ruſt may corrupt, or thieves break through and ſteal:" if you will add houſe to houſe, or field to field, why do you call yourſelf a Chriſtian? You do not obey Jeſus Chriſt. You do not deſign it. Why do you name yourſelf by the name? "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," ſaith he himſelf, "and do not the things which I ſay?"

23. If you aſk, "But what muſt we do with our goods, ſeeing we have more than we have occaſion to uſe, if we muſt not lay them up? Muſt we throw them away?" I anſwer, If you threw them into the ſea, if you were to caſt them into the fire and conſume them, they would be better beſtowed than they are now. You cannot find ſo miſchievous a manner of throwing them away, as either the laying them up for your poſterity, or the laying them out upon yourſelves, in folly and ſuperfluity. Of all poſſible methods of *throwing them away*, theſe two are the very worſt; the moſt oppoſite to the goſpel of Chriſt, and the moſt pernicious to your own ſoul.

How pernicious to your own ſoul the latter of theſe is, has been excellently ſhewn by a late Writer.

Writer. "If we waſte our money, we are not only guilty of waſting a talent which God has given us, but we do ourſelves this farther harm, we turn this uſeful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourſelves: becauſe ſo far as it is ſpent wrong, ſo far it is ſpent in the ſupport of ſome wrong temper, in gratifying ſome vain and unreaſonable deſires, which as Chriſtians we are obliged to renounce."

"As wit and fine parts cannot be only trifled away, but will expoſe thoſe that have them to greater follies: ſo money cannot be only trifled away, but if it is not uſed according to Reaſon and Religion, will make people live a more ſilly and extravagant life, than they would have done without it: if therefore you do not ſpend your money in doing good to others, you muſt ſpend it to the hurt of yourſelf. You act like one that refuſes the cordial to his ſick friend, which he cannot drink himſelf without inflaming his blood. For this is the caſe of ſuperfluous money; if you give it to thoſe that want it, it is a cordial. If you ſpend it upon yourſelf in ſomething that you do not want, it only inflames and diſorders your mind."

"In uſing riches where they have no real uſe, nor we any real want, we only uſe them to our great hurt, in creating unreaſonable deſires, in nouriſhing ill tempers, in indulging fooliſh paſſions and ſupporting a vain turn of mind. For high eating and drinking, fine clothes and fine houſes, ſtate and equipage, gay pleaſures and diverſions, do all of them naturally hurt and diſorder our hearts. They are the food and nouriſhment of all the folly and weakneſs of our nature. They are all of them the ſupport of ſomething, that

that ought not to be ſupported. They are contrary to that ſobriety and piety of heart, which reliſhes divine things. They are ſo many weights upon our mind, that make us leſs able and leſs inclined to raiſe our thoughts and affections to things above."

"So that money thus ſpent is not merely waſted or loſt, but it is ſpent to bad purpoſes and miſerable effects: to the corruption and diſorder of our hearts, to the making us unable to follow the ſublime doctrines of the goſpel. It is but like keeping money from the poor to buy poiſon for ourſelves."

24. Equally inexcuſable are thoſe who *lay up* what they do not need for any reaſonable purpoſes. "If a man had hands and eyes and feet that he could give to thoſe that wanted them; if he ſhould lock them up in a cheſt, inſtead of giving them to his brethren, that were blind and lame, ſhould we not juſtly reckon him an inhuman wretch, if he ſhould rather chuſe to amuſe himſelf with hoarding them up, than entitle himſelf to an eternal reward, by giving them to thoſe that wanted eyes and hands, might we not juſtly reckon him mad?"

"Now money has very much the nature of eyes and feet. If therefore we lock it up in cheſts, while the poor and diſtreſt want it for their neceſſary uſes, we are not far from the cruelty of him, that chuſes rather to hoard up the hands and eyes, than to give them to thoſe that want them. If we chuſe to lay it up, rather than to entitle ourſelves to an eternal reward, by diſpoſing of our money well, we are guilty of his madneſs, that rather chuſes to lock up eyes and hands, than to make himſelf for ever bleſſed by giving them to thoſe that want them."

25. May not this be another reaſon why rich men ſhall ſo hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven? A vaſt majority of them are under a curſe, under the peculiar curſe of God: inaſmuch as in the general tenor of their lives, they are not only robbing God continually, embezzling and waſting their Lord's goods, and by that very means corrupting their own ſouls: but alſo robbing the poor, the hungry, the naked, wronging the widow and the fatherleſs, and making themſelves accountable for all the want, affliction, and diſtreſs, which they may, but do not remove. Yea, doth not the blood of all thoſe who periſh for want, of what they either lay up, or lay out needleſsly, cry againſt them from the earth? O what account will they give, to him who is ready to judge both the quick and the dead!

26. The true way of employing what you do not want yourſelves, you may, fourthly learn from thoſe words of our Lord, which are the counterpart of what went before: "Lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven; where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal." Put out whatever thou canſt ſpare, upon better ſecurity than this world can afford. Lay up thy treaſures in the bank of heaven: and God ſhall reſtore them in that day. "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and look, what he layeth out, it ſhall be paid him again." Place that, ſaith he, unto my account. Howbeit! "thou oweſt me thine own ſelf alſo!"

Give to the poor with a ſingle eye, with an upright heart, and write, "So much given to God." For "inaſmuch as ye did it unto one of

the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This is the part of *a faithful and wiſe ſteward*. Not to ſell either his houſes or lands, or principal ſtock, be it more or leſs, unleſs ſome peculiar circumſtance ſhould require it; and not to deſire or endeavour to increaſe it, any more than to ſquander it away in vanity: but to employ it wholly to thoſe wiſe and reaſonable purpoſes, for which his Lord has lodged it in his hands. The wiſe ſteward, after having provided his own houſehold, with what is needful for life and godlineſs, *makes* himſelf *friends with* all that remains from time to time of the "mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when he fails, they may receive him into everlaſting habitations:" that whenſoever his earthly tabernacle is diſſolved, they who were before carried into Abraham's boſom, after having eaten his bread, and worn the fleece of his flock, and praiſed God for the conſolation, may welcome him into Paradiſe, and to *the houſe of God, eternal in the heavens*.

27. We *charge you*, therefore, *who are rich in this world*, as having authority from our great Lord and Maſter, ἀγαθοεργεῖν *to be habitually doing good*, to live in a courſe of good works. "Be ye merciful as your Father which is in heaven is merciful," who doeth good and ceaſeth not. *Be ye merciful*,—"How far?"—*After your power*, with all the ability which God giveth. Make this your only meaſure of doing good, not any beggarly maxims or cuſtoms of the world. We *charge you to be rich in good works*; as you have much, to *give plenteouſly*. Freely ye have received; freely give; ſo as to lay up no treaſure but in heaven. Be ye *ready to diſtribute*, to every one according to

to his neceſſity. Diſperſe abroad, give to the poor; deal your bread to the hungry. Cover the naked with a garment, entertain the ſtranger, carry or ſend relief to them that are in priſon. Heal the ſick; not by miracle, but through the bleſſing of God upon your ſeaſonable ſupport. Let the bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh through pining want, come upon thee. Defend the oppreſſed, plead the cauſe of the fatherleſs, and make the widow's heart ſing for joy.

28. We exhort *you*, in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to *be willing to communicate*: κοινωνικὸς εἶναι. To be of the ſame ſpirit (though not in the ſame outward ſtate) with thoſe believers of ancient times, who *remained ſtedfaſt* ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, *in* that bleſſed and holy *fellowſhip*, wherein *none ſaid, that any thing was his own, but they had all things common*. Be a ſteward, a faithful and wiſe ſteward, of God and of the poor; differing from them in theſe two circumſtances only. That your wants are firſt ſupplied, out of the portion of your Lord's goods which remains in your hands, and that you have the bleſſedneſs of giving. Thus *lay up for yourſelves a good foundation*, not in the world, which now is, but rather "for the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life." The great foundation indeed of all the bleſſings of God, whether temporal or eternal, is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his righteouſneſs and blood, what he hath done, and what he hath ſuffered for us. And *other foundation*, in this ſenſe, *can no man lay*; no not an Apoſtle, no not an angel from heaven. But through his merits, whatever we do in his name, is a foundation for a good reward, in the day when "every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own la-

bour :" Therefore, " labour" thou, " not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." Therefore " whatsoever thy hand now findeth to do, do it with thy might." Therefore let

" No fair occasion pass unheeded by ;
Snatching the golden moments as they fly,
Thou by few fleeting years ensure eternity !"

" By patient continuance in well-doing, seek thou for glory and honour and immortality." In a constant, zealous performance of all good works, wait thou for that happy hour when *the King shall say*, " I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison and ye came unto me. Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world !"

SERMON

SERMON XXVIII.

DISCOURSE the NINTH, upon our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VI. 24—34.

No man can ſerve two maſters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air; for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his ſtature?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

1. IT is recorded of the nations whom the King of Assyria, after he had carried Israel away into captivity, placed in the cities of Samaria, that "They feared the Lord, and served their own gods." "These nations," saith the inspired writer, feared the Lord," performed an outward service to him, (a plain proof that they had a fear of God, though not according to knowledge) "and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children; as did their fathers, so did they unto this day," 2 Kings xvii. 33, &c.

How nearly does the practice of most modern Christians resemble this of the ancient heathens? They

They fear the Lord: they alſo perform an outward ſervice to him, and thereby ſhew, they have ſome fear of God; but they likewiſe *ſerve their own gods.* There are thoſe who *teach them* (as there were who taught the Aſſyrians) *the manner of the god of the Land;* the god whoſe name the country bears to this day, and who was once worſhipped there with an holy worſhip. *Howbeit,* they do not ſerve him alone; they do not fear him enough for this. But *every nation maketh gods of their own: every nation in the cities wherein they dwell. Theſe nations fear the Lord,* they have not laid aſide the outward form of worſhipping him. But *they ſerve their graven images,* ſilver and gold, the work of men's hands. Money, pleaſure, and praiſe, the goods of this world, more than divide their ſervice with the God of Iſrael. This is the manner both of "their children and their children's children; as did their fathers, ſo do they unto this day."

2. But although ſpeaking in a looſe way, after the common manner of men, thoſe poor heathens were ſaid to *fear the Lord,* yet we may obſerve the Holy Ghoſt immediately adds, ſpeaking according to the truth and real nature of things, "They fear not the Lord, neither do after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob: with whom the Lord made a covenant, and charged them, ſaying, Ye ſhall not fear other gods, nor ſerve them. —But the Lord your God ye ſhall fear, and he ſhall deliver you out of the hands of your enemies."

The ſame judgment is paſt, by the unerring Spirit of God, and indeed by all, the eyes of whoſe underſtanding he hath opened, to diſcern the

the things of God, upon theſe poor Chriſtians, commonly ſo called. If we ſpeak according to the truth and real nature of things, "they fear not the Lord, neither do they ſerve him." For they do not "after the covenant the Lord hath made with them, neither after the law and commandment which he hath commanded them, ſaying, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve." "They ſerve other gods unto this day." And *no man can ſerve two maſters.*

3. How vain is it for any man to aim at this? To attempt the ſerving of two maſters. Is it not eaſy to foreſee, what muſt be the unavoidable conſequences of ſuch an attempt? "Either he will hate the one and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one and deſpiſe the other." The two parts of this ſentence, although ſeparately propoſed, are to be underſtood in connexion with each other. For the latter part is a conſequence of the former. He will naturally *hold to* him whom he loves. He will ſo cleave to him, as to perform to him a willing, faithful, and diligent ſervice. And in the mean time, he will ſo far, at leaſt, *deſpiſe* the maſter he hates, as to have little regard to his commands, and to obey them, if at all, in a ſlight and careleſs manner. Therefore, whatſoever the wiſe men of the world may ſuppoſe, "Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon."

4. *Mammon* was the name of one of the heathen gods, who was ſuppoſed to preſide over riches. It is here underſtood of riches themſelves; gold or ſilver, or in general money: and by a common figure of ſpeech, of all that may be

be purchaſed thereby; ſuch as eaſe, honour, and ſenſual pleaſure.

But what are we here to underſtand, by *ſerving God?* And what, by *ſerving mammon?*

We cannot *ſerve* God, unleſs we believe in him. This is the only true foundation of ſerving him. Therefore, the believing in God, as *reconciling the world to himſelf* through *Chriſt Jeſus*, the believing in him, as a loving, pardoning God, is the firſt great branch of his ſervice.

And, thus to believe in God implies, to *truſt* in him as our ſtrength, without whom we can do nothing, who every moment endues us with power from on high, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe him: as our help, our only help in time of trouble, who compaſſeth us about with ſongs of deliverance; as our ſhield, our defender, and the lifter up of our head above all our enemies that are round about us.

It implies to truſt in God as our happineſs; as the center of ſpirits, the only reſt of our ſouls; the only good who is adequate to all our capacities, and ſufficient to ſatisfy all the deſires he hath given us.

It implies (what is nearly allied to the other) to truſt in God, as our end; to have an eye to him in all things; to uſe all things only as means of enjoying him; whereſoever we are, or whatſoever we do, to ſee Him that is inviſible, looking on us well pleaſed, and refer all things to him in Chriſt Jeſus.

5. Thus to believe, is the firſt thing we are to underſtand by *ſerving God.* The ſecond is, To love him.

Now, to love God in the manner the ſcripture deſcribes, in the manner God himſelf requires of us,

us, is to love him as the One God; that is, "with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength:" it is to deſire God alone for his own ſake; and nothing elſe, but with reference to him: to rejoice in God; to delight in the Lord; not only to ſeek but find happineſs in him: to enjoy God as the chiefeſt among ten thouſand; to reſt in him, as our God and our all. In a word, to have ſuch a poſſeſſion of God, as makes us always happy.

6. A third thing we are to underſtand by *ſerving God*, is, to reſemble or imitate him.

So the ancient Father, *Optimus Dei Cultus, imitari quem colis*; It is the beſt worſhip or ſervice of God, to imitate him you worſhip.

We here ſpeak of imitating or reſembling him in the ſpirit of our minds. For here the true Chriſtian imitation of God begins. God is a ſpirit; and they that imitate or reſemble him, muſt do it in ſpirit and in truth.

Now God is love. Therefore they who reſemble him in the ſpirit of their minds, are transformed into the ſame image. They are merciful, even as he is merciful. Their ſoul is all love. They are kind, benevolent, compaſſionate, tender-hearted: and that not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the forward. Yea, they are, like him, loving unto every man, and their mercy extends to all his works.

7. One thing more we are to underſtand by *ſerving God*, and that is the obeying him; the glorifying him with our bodies, as well as with our ſpirits; the keeping his outward commandments: the zealouſly doing whatever he hath enjoined, the carefully avoiding whatever he hath forbidden:

forbidden: the performing all the ordinary actions of life, with a single eye and a pure heart; offering them in holy, fervent love, as sacrifices to God, through Jesus Christ.

8. Let us consider now, what we are to understand, on the other hand, by *serving mammon*. And first, it implies, the *trusting* in riches, in money, or the things purchaseable thereby, as our strength, the means whereby we shall perform whatever cause we have in hand: the trusting in them as our help, by which we look to be comforted in, or delivered out of trouble.

It implies, the trusting in the world for happiness; the supposing that *a man's life consisteth* (the comfort of his life) *in the abundance of the things which he possesseth:* the looking for rest, in the things that are seen; for content in outward plenty; the expecting that satisfaction in the things of the world, which can never be found out of God.

And if we do this, we cannot but make the world our end; the ultimate end, if not of all, at least of many of our undertakings, many of our actions and designs: in which we shall aim only at an increase of wealth; at the obtaining pleasure or praise; at the gaining a larger measure of temporal things, without any reference to things eternal.

9. The *serving mammon* implies, secondly, Loving the world: desiring it for its own sake; the placing our joy in the things thereof, and setting our hearts upon them: the seeking (what indeed it is impossible we should find) our happiness therein; the resting with the whole weight of our souls, upon the staff of this broken reed;

although

although daily experience shews it cannot support, but will only *enter into our hand and pierce it.*

10. To resemble, to be conformed to the world, is a third thing we are to understand by *serving mammon:* to have not only designs, but desires, tempers, affections suitable to those of the world: to be of an earthly, sensual mind, chained down to the things of earth: to be self-willed, inordinate lovers of ourselves; to think highly of our own attainments; to desire and delight in the praise of men: to fear, shun, and abhor reproach: to be impatient of reproof, easy to be provoked, and swift to return evil for evil.

11. To *serve mammon* is lastly, to obey the world, by outward conforming to its maxims and customs; to walk as other men walk, in the common road, in the broad, smooth, beaten path; to be in the fashion, to follow a multitude; to do like the rest of our neighbours; that is, to do the will of the flesh and the mind, to gratify our appetites and inclinations: to sacrifice to ourselves; aim at our own ease and pleasure, in the general course both of our words and actions.

Now what can be more undeniably clear, than that we *cannot* thus *serve God and mammon?*

12. Does not every man see, that he cannot *comfortably* serve both? That to trim between God and the world, is the sure way to be disappointed in both, and to have no rest either in one or the other? How uncomfortable a condition must he be in, who having the fear, but not the love of God, who serving him, but not with all his heart, has only the toils and not the joys of Religion? He has Religion enough to

make him miserable, but not enough to make him happy: his religion will not let him enjoy the world; and the world will not let him enjoy God. So that by halting between both, he loses both, and has no peace either in God or the world.

13. Does not every man see, that he cannot serve both, *consistently* with himself? What more glaring inconsistency can be conceived, than must continually appear in his whole behaviour, who is endeavouring to obey both these masters, striving to *serve God and mammon?* He is indeed *a sinner that goeth two ways;* one step forward and another backward. He is continually building up with one hand, and pulling down with the other. He loves sin, and he hates it: he is always seeking, and yet always fleeing from God. He would, and he would not. He is not the same man, for one day; no, not for an hour together. He is a motly mixture of all sorts of contrarieties; a heap of contradictions jumbled in one. O, be consistent with thyself, one way or the other. Turn to the right hand or to the left. If *mammon* be God, serve thou him; if the *Lord*, then serve him. But never think of serving either at all, unless it be with thy whole heart.

14. Does not every reasonable, every thinking man see, that he cannot *possibly serve God and mammon?* Because there is the most absolute contrariety, the most irreconcilable enmity between them. The contrariety between the most opposite things on earth, between fire and water, darkness and light, vanishes into nothing, when compared to the contrariety between God and *mammon*. So that in whatsoever respect you serve the one, you necessarily renounce the other. Do you believe in God through Christ? Do you trust in him as your

ſtrength, your help, your ſhield, and your exceeding great reward? As your happineſs? your end in all, above all things? Then you cannot *truſt* in riches. It is abſolutely impoſſible you ſhould, ſo long as you have this faith in God. Do you thus *truſt in riches?* Then you have denied the faith. You do not truſt in the living God. Do you *love* God? Do you ſeek and find happineſs in him? Then you cannot love the world; neither the things of the world. You are crucified to the world, and the world crucified to you. Do you *love the world?* Are your affections ſet on things beneath? Do you ſeek happineſs in earthly things? Then it is impoſſible you ſhould love God. Then the love of the Father is not in you. Do you *reſemble* God? Are you transformed by the renewal of your mind, into the image of him that created you? Then you cannot be conformed to the preſent world. You have renounced all its affections and luſts. Are you conformed to the world? Does your ſoul ſtill bear the image of the earthly? Then you are not renewed in the ſpirit of your mind. You do not bear the image of the heavenly. Do you *obey* God? Are you zealous to do his will on earth, as the angels do in heaven? Then it is impoſſible you ſhould *obey mammon*. Then you ſet the world at open defiance. You trample its cuſtoms and maxims under foot, and will neither follow nor be led by them. Do you follow the world? Do you live like other men? Do you pleaſe men? Do you pleaſe yourſelf? Then you cannot be a ſervant of God. You are of your maſter and father, the devil.

15. Therefore thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve. Thou ſhalt lay aſide all thoughts of obeying two maſters, of

ſerving

ſerving God and *mammon*. Thou ſhalt propoſe to thyſelf no end, no help, no happineſs, but God. Thou ſhalt ſeek nothing in earth or heaven but him: thou ſhalt aim at nothing, but to know, to love and enjoy him. And becauſe this is all your buſineſs below, the only view you can reaſonably have, the one deſign you are to purſue in all things; "therefore I ſay unto you" (as our Lord continues his diſcourſe) "Take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on." A deep and weighty direction, which it imports us well to conſider, and thoroughly to underſtand.

16. Our Lord does not here require, that we ſhould be utterly without thought, even touching the concerns of this life. A giddy, careleſs temper, is at the fartheſt remove from the whole Religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Neither does he require us to be *ſlothful in buſineſs*, to be ſlack and dilatory therein. This likewiſe is contrary to the whole ſpirit and genius of his Religion. A Chriſtian abhors ſloth as much as drunkenneſs, and flees from idleneſs as he does from adultery. He well knows, that there is one kind of thought and care, with which God is well-pleaſed; which is abſolutely needful for the due performance of thoſe outward works, unto which the Providence of God has called him.

It is the will of God, that every man ſhould labour to *eat his own bread:* yea, and that every man ſhould provide for his own, for them of his own houſehold. It is likewiſe his will, that we ſhould *owe no man any thing*, but *provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men*. But this cannot be done, without taking ſome thought, without having ſome care upon our minds: yea, often,

not without long and ſerious thought, not without much and earneſt care. Conſequently, this care, to provide for ourſelves and our houſehold, this thought, How to render to all their dues, our bleſſed Lord does not condemn. Yea, it is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.

It is good and acceptable to God, that we ſhould ſo take thought concerning whatever we have in hand, as to have a clear comprehenſion of what we are about to do, and to plan our buſineſs before we enter upon it. And it is right that we ſhould carefully conſider from time to time, what ſteps we are to take therein; as well as that we ſhould prepare all things before hand, for the carrying it on in the moſt effectual manner. This care, termed by ſome, "The care of the head," it was by no means our Lord's deſign to condemn.

17. What he here condemns is, "The care of the heart:" the anxious, uneaſy care: the care that hath torment; all ſuch care as does hurt, either to the ſoul or body. What he forbids is, That care which ſad experience ſhews, waſtes the blood and drinks up the ſpirits: which anticipates all the miſery it fears, and comes to torment us before the time. He forbids only that care, which poiſons the bleſſings of to-day, by fear of what may be to-morrow; which cannot enjoy the preſent plenty, through apprehenſions of future want. This care is not only a ſore diſeaſe, a grievous ſickneſs of ſoul, but alſo an heinous offence againſt God, a ſin of the deepeſt dye. It is an high affront to the gracious Governor and wiſe Diſpoſer of all things; neceſſarily implying, that the great Judge does not do right, that he does not order all things well. It plainly implies, That he is wanting,

wanting, either in wiſdom, if he does not know what things we ſtand in need of: or in goodneſs, if he does not provide thoſe things, for all who put their truſt in him. Beware, therefore, that you take not thought in this ſenſe: be ye anxiouſly careful for nothing. Take no uneaſy thought: this is a plain, ſure rule, *Uneaſy* care, is *unlawful care*. With a ſingle eye to God, do all that in you lies, to provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. And then give up all into better hands: leave the whole event to God.

18. "Take no thought," of this kind, no uneaſy thought even "for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" If then God gave you life, the greater gift, will he not give you food to ſuſtain it? More eſpecially, if you give yourſelves up to him, and ſerve him with your whole heart. "Behold," ſee before your eyes, "the fowls of the air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;" and yet they lack nothing, "yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Ye that are creatures capable of God? Are ye not of more account in the eyes of God? Of a higher rank in the ſcale of beings? "And which of you by taking thought, can add one cubit to his ſtature?" What profit have you then for this anxious thought? It is every way fruitleſs and unavailing.

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Have ye not a daily reproof, wherever you turn your eyes? "Conſider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin. And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all his

glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," is cut down, burnt up, and seen no more, "shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" You, whom he made to endure for ever, and ever, to be pictures of his own eternity! Ye are indeed of little faith. Otherwise you could not doubt of his love and care, no, not for a moment.

19. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat," if we lay up no treasure upon earth? "What shall we drink," if we serve God with all our strength, if our eye be singly fixed on him? "Wherewithal shall we be clothed," if we are not conformed to the world, if we disoblige those by whom we might be profited? "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek," the heathens who know not God. But ye are sensible, "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." And he hath pointed out to you an infallible way, of being constantly supplied therewith. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

20. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Before ye give place to any other thought or care, let it be your concern, That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who "gave his only begotten Son, to the end that believing in him, ye might not perish but have everlasting life," may reign in your heart, may manifest himself in your soul, and dwell and rule there: that he may "cast down every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

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Let God have the ſole dominion over you. Let him reign without a rival. Let him poſſeſs all your heart, and rule alone. Let him be your one deſire, your joy, your love: ſo that all that is within you may continually cry out, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

"Seek the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs." Righteouſneſs is the fruit of God's reigning in the heart. And what is righteouſneſs but love? The love of God and of all mankind, flowing from faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and producing humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering, patience, deadneſs to the world, and every right diſpoſition of heart, toward God and toward man. And by theſe it produces all holy actions, whatſoever are lovely or of good report; whatſoever works of faith and labour of love are acceptable to God, and profitable to man.

His righteouſneſs: this is all *his* righteouſneſs ſtill: it is his own free *gift* to us, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, through whom alone it is purchaſed for us: and it is his *work:* it is he alone that worketh in us, by the inſpiration of his holy Spirit.

21. Perhaps the well obſerving this may give light to ſome other Scriptures, which we have not always ſo clearly underſtood. St. Paul ſpeaking in his epiſtle to the Romans, concerning the unbelieving Jews, ſaith, "They being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God." They were *ignorant of God's righteouſneſs*, not only of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, imputed to every believer, whereby all his ſins

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are blotted out, and he is reconciled to the favour of God: but (which seems here to be more immediately understood) they were ignorant of that inward righteousness, of that holiness of heart, which is with the utmost propriety, termed, *God's righteousness*, as being both his own free gift through Christ, and his own work, by his almighty Spirit. And because they were ignorant of this, they *went about to establish their own righteousness*. They laboured to establish that outside righteousness, which might very properly be termed *their own*. For neither was it wrought by the Spirit of God, nor was it owned or accepted of him. They might work it themselves, by their own natural strength: and when they had done, it was a stink in his nostrils. And yet trusting in this, they would "not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." Yea, they hardened themselves against the faith, whereby alone it was possible to attain it. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Christ, when he said, *It is finished*, put an end to the law, to the law of external rites and ceremonies, that he might, "bring in a better righteousness, through his blood, by that one oblation of himself once offered, even the image of God, into the inmost soul of *every one that believeth*.

22. Nearly related to these are those words of the Apostle, in his epistle to the Philippians. "I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ," an entrance into his everlasting kingdom, "and be found in him," [believing in him,] "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the

the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith."—"Not having my own righteouſneſs which is of the law;" a barely external righteouſneſs, the outſide religion I formerly had, when I hoped to be accepted of God, becauſe I was, "touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs."—"But that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith:" that holineſs of heart, that renewal of the ſoul, in all its deſires, tempers and affections, "which is of God:" it is the work of God and not of man, "by faith;" through the faith of Chriſt, through the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt in us, and by faith in his blood; whereby alone we can obtain the remiſſion of our ſins, and an inheritance among thoſe that are ſanctified.

23. *Seek ye firſt* this *kingdom of God* in your hearts, this *righteouſneſs*, which is the gift and work of God, the image of God renewed in your ſouls: *and all theſe things ſhall* be added unto you: all things needful for the body; ſuch a meaſure of all, as God ſees moſt for the advancement of his kingdom. Theſe *ſhall be added*, they ſhall be thrown in, over and above. In ſeeking the peace and the love of God, you ſhall not only find what you more immediately ſeek, even the kingdom that cannot be moved; but alſo what you ſeek not, not at all for its own ſake, but only in reference to the other. You ſhall find in your way to the kingdom, all outward things, ſo far as they are expedient for you: this care God hath taken upon himſelf: caſt you all your care upon him. He knoweth your wants: and whatſoever is lacking he will not fail to ſupply.

24. "Therefore

24. "Therefore take no thought for the morrow." Not only, take ye no thought, how to lay up treasures on earth, how to increase in worldly substance; take no thought how to procure more food than you can eat, or more raiment than you can put on; or more money than is required from day to day, for the plain, reasonable purposes of life: but take no *uneasy* thought, even concerning those things which are absolutely needful for the body. Do not trouble yourself now, with thinking what you shall do at a season which is yet afar off. Perhaps that season will never come: or it will be no concern of yours: before then you will have passed through all the waves, and be landed in eternity. All those distant views do not belong to *you*, who are but a creature of a day. Nay, what have you to do with *the morrow*, more strictly speaking? Why should you perplex yourself without need? God provides for you to-day, what is needful to sustain the life which he hath given you. It is enough: give yourself up into his hands: if you live another day, he will provide for that also.

25. Above all, do not make the care of future things, a pretence for neglecting present duty. This is the most fatal way of *taking thought for the morrow*. And how common is it among men? Many, if we exhort them to keep a conscience void of offence, to abstain from what they are convinced is evil, do not scruple to reply, "How then must ~~we~~ we live? Must we not take care of ourselves and of our families?" And this they imagine to be a sufficient reason, for continuing in known, wilful sin. They say, and perhaps think, they would serve God now, were it not that they should by and by

by loſe their bread. They would prepare for eternity; but they are afraid of wanting the neceſſaries of life. So they ſerve the devil for a morſel of bread: they ruſh into hell, for fear of want; they throw away their poor ſouls, leſt they ſhould ſome time or other fall ſhort, of what is needful for their bodies.

It is not ſtrange that they who thus take the matter out of God's hand, ſhould be ſo often diſappointed of the very things they ſeek; that while they throw away heaven, to ſecure the things of earth, they loſe the one, but do not gain the other. The jealous God, in the wiſe courſe of his Providence, frequently ſuffers this. So that they who will not caſt their care on God, who taking thought for temporal things, have little concern for things eternal, loſe the very portion which they have choſen. There is a viſible blaſt on all their undertakings: whatſoever they do, it doth not proſper. Inſomuch, that after they have forſaken God for the world, they loſe what they ſought, as well as what they ſought not. They fall ſhort of the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs; nor yet are other things added unto them.

26. There is another way of *taking thought for the morrow*, which is equally forbidden in theſe words. It is impoſſible to *take thought* in a wrong manner, even with regard to ſpiritual things: to be ſo careful about what may be by and by, as to neglect what is now required at our hands. How inſenſibly do we ſlide into this, if we are not continually watching unto prayer? How eaſily are we carried away, in a kind of waking dream, projecting diſtant ſchemes, and drawing fine ſcenes in our own imagination! We

We think, what good we will do, when we are in such a place, or when such a time is come! How useful we will then be, how plenteous in good works, when we are easier in our circumstances? How earnestly we will serve God, when once such an hinderance is out of the way.

Or, perhaps, you are now in heaviness of soul: God, as it were, hides his face from you. You see little of the light of his countenance; you cannot taste his redeeming love. In such a temper of mind, how natural is it to say, "O how will I praise God, when the light of his countenance shall be again lifted upon my soul? How will I exhort others to praise him, when his love is again shed abroad in my heart? Then I will do thus and thus: I will speak for God in all places: I will not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Then I will redeem the time. I will use to the uttermost every talent I have received." Do not believe thyself. Thou wilt not do it then, unless thou dost it now. "He that is faithful in that which is little," of whatsoever kind it be, whether it be worldly substance, or the fear or love of God, "will be faithful in that which is much." But if thou now hidest one talent in the earth, thou wilt then hide five: that is, if ever they are given; but there is small reason to expect they ever will. Indeed "unto him that hath," that is, uses what he hath, "shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. But from him that hath not," that is, uses not the grace which he hath already received, whether in a larger or smaller degree, "shall be taken away even that which he hath."

27. And

27. And *take no thought* for the temptations of to-morrow. This is alſo a dangerous ſnare. Think not, "When ſuch a temptation comes, what ſhall I do? how ſhall I ſtand? I feel, I have not power to reſiſt: I am not able to conquer that enemy." Moſt true: you have not *now* the power which you do not *now* ſtand in need of. You are not able at *this time* to conquer that enemy! and at *this time* he does not aſſault you. With the grace you have now, you could not withſtand the temptations which you have not. But when the temptation comes, the grace will come. In greater trials you will have greater ſtrength. When ſufferings abound, the conſolations of God will in the ſame proportion abound alſo. So that in every ſituation, the grace of God will be ſufficient for you. He doth not ſuffer you *to be tempted* today, *above that ye are able to bear*. And "in every temptation he will make a way to eſcape." "As thy day, ſo thy ſtrength ſhall be."

28. *Let the morrow* therefore *take thought for the things of itſelf;* that is, when the morrow comes, then think of it. Live thou to-day. Be it thy earneſt care to improve the preſent hour. This is your own; and it is your all. The paſt is as nothing, as though it had never been. The future is nothing to you: it is not yours; perhaps it never will be. There is no depending on what is yet to come; for you "know not what a day may bring forth." Therefore live to-day: loſe not an hour: uſe this moment: for it is your portion. "Who knoweth the things which have been before him, or which ſhall be after him under the ſun?" The generations, that were from the beginning of the world, where are they now? Fled away: forgotten. They *were;* they lived

their day; they were ſhook off the earth, as leaves from off their trees. They mouldered away into common duſt. Another and another race ſucceeded; then they "followed the generation of their fathers, and ſhall never more ſee the light." Now is thy turn upon the earth. "Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth." Enjoy the very, very now; by enjoying Him, "whoſe years fail not." Now let thine eye be ſingly fixed on Him, "in whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning." Now give him thy heart: now ſtay thyſelf on Him: now be thou holy as He is holy. Now lay hold of the bleſſed opportunity of doing his acceptable and perfect will. Now "rejoice to ſuffer the loſs of all things, ſo thou mayeſt win Chriſt."

29. Gladly ſuffer to-day, for his name's ſake, whatſoever he permits this day to come upon thee. But look not at the ſufferings of to-morrow. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Evil it is, ſpeaking after the manner of men: whether it be reproach or want, pain or ſickneſs. But in the language of God, all is bleſſing: "it is a precious balm," prepared by the wiſdom of God, and variouſly diſpenſed among his children, according to the various ſickneſſes of their ſouls. And he gives in one day, ſufficient for that day; proportioned to the want and ſtrength of the patient. If therefore thou ſnatcheſt to-day what belongs to thee to-morrow; if thou addeſt this to what is given thee already, it will be more than thou canſt bear: this is the way not to heal, but to deſtroy thine own ſoul. Take therefore juſt as much as he gives thee to-day: to day do and ſuffer his will. To-day give up thyſelf, thy body, ſoul, and ſpirit, to God, through Chriſt Jeſus: deſiring

desiring nothing, but that God may be glorified in all thou art, all thou doſt, all thou ſuffereſt: ſeeking nothing, but to know God, and his Son, Jeſus Chriſt, through the eternal Spirit: purſuing nothing, but to love him, to ſerve him, and to enjoy him at this hour, and to all eternity!

Now unto God the Father, who hath made me and all the world; unto God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind; unto God the Holy Ghoſt, who ſanctifieth me and all the elect people of God: be honour and praiſe, majeſty, and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen.

SERMON XXIX.

DISCOURSE the TENTH, on our LORD'S SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VII. 1—12.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.
For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged; and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.
And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?
Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?
Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.
Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine; leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.
Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.

For

For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone?

Or if he ask a fish, will give him a serpent?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?

Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.

1. OUR blessed Lord, having now finished his main design, having first delivered the sum of true Religion, carefully guarded against those glosses of men, whereby they would make the word of God of none effect: and having next, laid down rules touching that right intention, which we are to preserve in all our inward actions: now proceeds to point out the main hinderances of this religion, and concludes all with a suitable application.

2. In the fifth chapter our great Teacher has fully described inward religion in its various branches. He has there laid before us those dispositions of soul, which constitute real Christianity; the tempers contained in that holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord;" the affections, which when flowing from their proper fountain, from a living faith in God through Christ Jesus, are intrinsically and essentially good, and acceptable to God. In the sixth he has shewn, how all our actions likewise, even those that are indifferent in their own nature, may

be made holy and good, and acceptable to God, by a pure and holy intention. Whatever is done without this, he declares is of no value with God: whereas whatever outward works are thus conſecrated to God, are in his ſight of great price.

3. In the former part of this chapter he points out the moſt common and moſt fatal hinderances of this holineſs. In the latter, he exhorts us by various motives, to break through all, and ſecure that prize of our high calling.

4. The firſt hinderance he cautions us againſt is judging. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Judge not others, that ye be not judged of the Lord, that ye bring not vengeance on your own heads. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged, and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again:" a plain and equitable rule, whereby God permits you to determine for yourſelves, in what manner he ſhall deal with you in the judgment of the great day.

5. There is no ſtation of life, nor any period of time, from the hour of our firſt repenting and believing the goſpel, till we are made perfect in love, wherein this caution is not needful for every child of God. For occaſions of judging can never be wanting. And the temptations to it are innumerable: many whereof are ſo artfully diſguiſed, that we fall into the ſin, before we ſuſpect any danger. And unſpeakable are the miſchiefs produced hereby; always to him that judges another: thus wounding his own ſoul, and expoſing himſelf to the righteous judgment of God: and frequently to thoſe who are judged, whoſe hands hang down, who are weakened and hindered in their courſe, if not wholly turned out of the way, and cauſed to draw back even to perdition. Yea, how

how often when this *root of bitterneſs ſprings up*, are *many defiled thereby:* by reaſon whereof the way of truth itſelf is evil ſpoken of, and that worthy name blaſphemed whereby we are called.

6. Yet it does not appear, that our Lord deſigned this caution, only or chiefly for the children of God: but rather for the children of the world, for the men who know not God. Theſe cannot but hear of thoſe, who are not of the world, who follow after the religion above deſcribed: who endeavour to be humble, ſerious, gentle, merciful, and pure in heart; who earneſtly deſire ſuch meaſures of theſe holy tempers, as they have not attained: and wait for them in doing all good to all men, and patiently ſuffering evil. Whoever go but thus far, cannot be hid, no more than *a city ſet upon a hill.* And why do not thoſe, who *ſee* their *good works, glorify their Father which is in heaven?* What excuſe have they, for not treading in their ſteps? For not imitating their example, and being followers of them, as they are alſo of Chriſt? Why, in order to provide an excuſe for themſelves, they condemn thoſe whom they ought to imitate. They ſpend their time in finding out their neighbour's faults, inſtead of amending their own. They are ſo buſied about others going out of the way, that they themſelves never come into it at all: at leaſt, never get forward, never go beyond a poor dead form of godlineſs without the power.

7. It is to theſe more eſpecially that our Lord ſays, "Why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye," the infirmities, the miſtakes, the imprudence, the weakneſs of the children of God; but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine

thine own eye?" Thou conſidereſt not the damnable impenitence, the ſatanic pride, the accurſed ſelf-will, the idolatrous love of the world, which are in thyſelf, and which make thy whole life an abomination to the Lord. Above all, with what ſupine careleſſneſs and indifference art thou dancing over the mouth of hell? And "how then," with what grace, with what decency or modeſty, "wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye," the exceſs of zeal for God, the extreme of ſelf-denial, the too great diſengagement from worldly cares and employments, the deſire to be day and night in prayer, or hearing the words of eternal life? "And behold a beam is in thine own eye!" Not a mote, like one of theſe. "Thou hypocrite!" Who pretendeſt to care for others and haſt no care for thy own ſoul! Who maketh a ſhow of zeal for the cauſe of God, when in truth thou neither loveſt nor feareſt him! "Firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye." Caſt out the beam of impenitence. Know thyſelf. See and feel thyſelf a ſinner. Feel, that thy inward parts are very wickedneſs, that thou art altogether corrupt and abominable, and that the wrath of God abideth on thee. Caſt out the beam of pride. Abhor thyſelf. Sink down as in the duſt and aſhes. Be more and more little and mean, and baſe and vile in thine own eyes. Caſt out the beam of ſelf-will. Learn what that meaneth, "If any man will come after me, let him renounce himſelf." Deny thyſelf and take up thy croſs daily. Let thy whole ſoul cry out, "I came down from heaven," (for ſo thou didſt, thou never-dying ſpirit, whether thou knoweſt it or no) "not to do my own will, but the will of him that

that ſent me." Caſt out the beam of love of the world. Love not the world, neither the things of the world. Be thou crucified unto the world, and the world crucified unto thee. Only *uſe* the world, but *enjoy* God. Seek all thy happineſs in him. Above all, caſt out the grand beam, that ſupine careleſſneſs and indifference. Deeply conſider, that *one thing is needful*, the one thing which thou haſt ſcarce ever thought of. Know and feel, that thou art a poor, vile, guilty worm, quivering over the great gulph! What art thou? A ſinner born to die: a leaf driven before the wind: a vapour ready to vaniſh away: juſt appearing, and then ſcattered into air, to be no more ſeen! See this, "And then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Then, if thou haſt leiſure from the concerns of thy own ſoul, thou ſhalt know how to correct thy brother alſo.

8. But what is properly the meaning of this word, *judge not?* What is the *judging* which is here forbidden? It is not the ſame as evil-ſpeaking, although it is frequently joined therewith. Evil-ſpeaking is, the relating any thing that is evil, concerning an abſent perſon: whereas *judging* may indifferently refer, either to the abſent or the preſent. Neither does it neceſſarily imply the ſpeaking at all, but only the *thinking evil* of another. Not that all kind of thinking evil of others, is that *judging* which our Lord condemns. If I ſee one commit robbery or murder, or hear him blaſpheme the name of God, I cannot refrain from thinking ill of the robber or murderer. Yet this is not evil *judging*: there is no ſin in this, nor any thing contrary to tender affection.

9. The

9. The thinking of another, in a manner that is contrary to love, is that *judging* which is here condemned, and this may be of various kinds. For, first, we may think another to blame when he is not. We may lay to his charge (at least in our own mind) the things of which he is not guilty: the words which he has never spoke, or the actions which he has never done. Or we may think his manner of acting was wrong, although in reality it was not. And even where nothing can justly be blamed, either in the thing itself, or in the manner of doing it, we may suppose his intention was not good, and so condemn him on that ground; at the same time that he who searches the heart, sees his simplicity and godly sincerity.

10. But we may not only fall into the sin of *judging*, by condemning the innocent, but also, secondly, by condemning the guilty, in a higher degree than he deserves. This species of judging is likewise an offence against justice, as well as mercy: and yet such an offence as nothing can secure us from, but the strongest and tenderest affection. Without this, we readily suppose one who is acknowledged to be in fault, to be more in fault than he really is. We undervalue whatever good is found in him. Nay, we are not easily induced to believe, that any thing good can remain in him, in whom we have found any thing that is evil.

11. All this shews a manifest want of that love, which ἀ λογίζεται κακόν, *thinketh no evil:* which never draws an unjust or unkind conclusion, from any premises whatsoever. Love will not infer, from a person's falling once into an act of open sin, that he is accustomed so to do, that he is habitually

habitually guilty of it: And if he was habitually guilty once, love does not conclude, he is ſo ſtill: much leſs, that if he is now guilty of this, therefore he is guilty of other ſins alſo. Theſe evil reaſonings all pertain to that ſinful judging, which our Lord here guards us againſt: and which we are in the higheſt degree concerned to avoid, if we love either God or our own ſouls.

12. But ſuppoſing we do not condemn the innocent, neither the guilty any farther than they deſerve: ſtill we may not be altogether clear of the ſnare. For there is a third ſort of ſinful judging, which is the condemning any perſon at all where there is not ſufficient evidence. And be the facts we ſuppoſe ever ſo true, yet that does not acquit us. For they ought not to have been ſuppoſed but proved, and till they were, we ought to have formed no judgment: I ſay, till they were: for neither are we excuſed, although the fact admit of ever ſo ſtrong proof, unleſs that proof be produced before we paſs ſentence, and compared with the evidence on the other ſide. Nor can we be excuſed, if ever we paſs a full ſentence, before the accuſed has ſpoken for himſelf. Even a Jew might teach us this, as a mere leſſon of juſtice abſtracted from mercy and brotherly love, "Doth our law, ſays Nicodemus, judge any man before it hear him and know what he doth?" John xvii. 51. Yea, a Heathen could reply, when the chief of the Jewiſh nation deſired to have judgment againſt his priſoner, "It is not the manner of the Romans to judge any man, before he that is accuſed have the accuſers face to face, and have licence to anſwer for himſelf, concerning the crime laid againſt him."

13. Indeed we could not eaſily fall into ſinful judging, were we only to obſerve that rule, which another

* another of thoſe heathen Romans affirms to have been the meaſure of his own practice. "I am ſo far, ſays he, from lightly believing every man's, or any man's evidence againſt another, that I do not eaſily or immediately believe a man's evidence againſt himſelf. I always allow him ſecond thoughts, and many times council too." Go thou who art called a Chriſtian, and do likewiſe, leſt the Heathen riſe and condemn thee in that day.

14. But how rarely ſhould we condemn or judge one another, at leaſt, how ſoon would that evil be remedied, were we to walk by that clear and expreſs rule, which our Lord himſelf has taught us? "If thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee," (or if thou hear, or believe that he hath) "go and tell him of his fault, between him and thee alone." This is the firſt ſtep thou art to take. "But if he will not hear, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes, every word may be eſtabliſhed." This is the ſecond ſtep. "If he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church;" either to the Overſeers thereof, or to the whole congregation. Thou haſt then done thy part. Then think of it no more, but commend the whole to God.

15. But ſuppoſing thou haſt, by the grace of God, "caſt the beam out of thine own eye," and doſt now "clearly ſee the mote or the beam which is in thy brother's eye," yet beware thou doſt not receive hurt thyſelf, by endeavouring to help him. Still "give not that which is holy unto dogs." Do not lightly account any to be of this number. But if it evidently appear, that they deſerve the title, then "caſt ye not your pearls before ſwine." Beware of

* Seneca. 2

of that zeal which is not according to knowledge. For this is another great hinderance in their way, who would be "perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect." They who desire this, cannot but desire that all mankind should partake of the common blessing. And when we ourselves first partake of the heavenly gift, the divine *evidence of things not seen*, we wonder that all mankind do not see, the things which we see so plainly, and make no doubt at all, but we shall open the eyes of all we have any intercourse with. Hence we are for attacking all we meet without delay, and constraining them to see, whether they will or no. And by ill success of this intemperate zeal, we often suffer in our own souls. To prevent this spending our strength in vain, our Lord adds this needful caution (needful to all, but more especially to those who are now warm in their first love:) "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine: lest they trample them under foot, and turn again and rend you."

16. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." Beware of thinking, that any deserve this appellation, till there is full and incontestible proof, such as you can no longer resist. But when it is clearly and indisputably proved, that they are unholy and wicked men, not only strangers to, but enemies to God, to all righteousness and true holiness; *Give not that which is holy, τὸ ἅγιον, the holy thing*, emphatically so called, unto these. The holy, the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, such as were *hid from the ages and generations* of old, and are now made known to us, only by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the

inſpiration of his holy Spirit; are not to be proſtituted unto theſe men, who know not if there be any Holy Ghoſt. Not indeed that the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt can refrain, from declaring them in the great congregation, wherein ſome of theſe may probably be. We muſt ſpeak, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. But this is not the caſe with private Chriſtians. They do not bear that awful character; nor are they under any manner of obligation, to force theſe great and glorious truths, on them who contradict and blaſpheme, who have a rooted enmity againſt them. Nay, they ought not ſo to do, but rather to lead them, as they are able to bear. Do not begin a diſcourſe with theſe, upon remiſſion of ſins, and the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. But talk with them in their own manner, and upon their own principles. With the rational, honourable, unjuſt Epicure, "reaſon of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come." This is the moſt probable way to make *Felix tremble*. Reſerve higher ſubjects for men of higher attainments.

17. "Neither caſt your pearls before ſwine." Be very unwilling to paſs this judgment on any man. But if the fact be plain and undeniable, if it is clear, beyond all diſpute, if the ſwine do not endeavour to diſguiſe themſelves, but rather glory in their ſhame, making no pretence to purity, either of heart or life, but working all uncleanneſs with greedineſs; then *caſt* not *ye your pearls before* them. Talk not to them of the myſteries of the kingdom: of the things which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard: which of conſequence, as they have no other inlets of knowledge, no ſpiritual ſenſes, it cannot enter into their hearts to conceive. Tell not them of the exceeding

exceeding great and precious promiſes which God hath given us, in the Son of his Love. What conception can they have, of being made partakers of the divine nature, who do not even deſire to eſcape the corruption that is in the world through luſt? Juſt as much knowledge as ſwine have of pearls, and as much reliſh as they have for them, ſo much reliſh have they for the deep things of God, ſo much knowledge of the myſteries of the goſpel, who are immerſed in the mire of this world, in worldly pleaſures, deſires and cares. O caſt not thoſe pearls before theſe, leſt they trample them under their feet, leſt they utterly deſpiſe what they cannot underſtand, and ſpeak evil of the things which they know not. Nay, it is probable, this would not be the only inconvenience which would follow. It would not be ſtrange, if they were, according to their nature, to turn again, and rend you: if they were to return you evil for good, curſing for bleſſing, and hatred for your good-will. Such is the enmity of the carnal mind, againſt God and all the things of God. Such the treatment you are to expect from theſe, if you offer them the unpardonable affront, of endeavouring to ſave their ſouls from death, to pluck them as brands out of the burning!

18. And yet you need not utterly deſpair even of theſe, who for the preſent turn again and rend you. For if all your arguments and perſuaſives fail, there is yet another remedy left; and one that is frequently found effectual, when no other method avails. This is prayer. Therefore whatever you deſire or want, either for others or for your own ſoul, "Aſk, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be

opened unto you." The neglect of this is a third grand hinderance of holiness. Still we "have not, because we ask not." O how meek and gentle, how lowly in heart, how full of love both to God and man, might ye have been at this day, if you had only asked? If you had continued instant in prayer! Therefore now, at least, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." *Ask*, that ye may thoroughly experience and perfectly practice the whole of that Religion, which our Lord has here so beautifully described. It shall then be given you, to be holy as he is holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation. *Seek*, in the way he hath ordained, in searching the Scriptures, in hearing his word, in meditating thereon, in fasting, in partaking of the Supper of the Lord, and surely ye shall find. Ye shall find the pearl of great price, that faith which overcometh the world, that peace which the world cannot give, that love which is the earnest of your inheritance. *Knock:* continue in prayer, and in every other way of the Lord. Be not weary or faint in your mind. Press on to the mark. Take no denial. Let him not go until he bless you. And the door of mercy, of holiness, of heaven, shall be opened unto you.

19. It is in compassion to the hardness of our heart, so unready to believe the goodness of God, that our Lord is pleased to enlarge upon this head, and to repeat and confirm what he hath spoken. "For every one, saith he, that asketh, receiveth:" so that none need come short of the blessing: "and he that seeketh," every one that seeketh "findeth," the love and the image of God: "and to him that knocketh," to every one that knocketh, the gate of righteousness shall be opened.

opened. So that here is no room for any to be discouraged, as though they might ask or seek or knock in vain. Only remember, always to pray, to seek, to knock and not to be faint. And then the promise standeth sure. It is firm as the pillars of heaven. Yea, more firm; for heaven and earth shall pass away; but his word shall not pass away.

20. To cut off every pretence for unbelief, our blessed Lord, in the following verses illustrates yet farther what he had said, by an appeal to what passes in our own breasts. "What man, saith he, is there of you, who if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" Will even natural affection permit you to refuse the reasonable request of one you love? "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Will he give him hurtful, instead of profitable things? So that even from what you feel and do yourselves, you may receive your fullest assurance, as, on the one hand, that no ill effect can possibly attend your asking, so on the other, that it will be attended with that good effect, a full supply of all your wants. For "if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven," who is pure, unmixt, essential goodness, "give good things to them that ask him?" Or, (as he expresses it on another occasion) "give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him?" In him are included all good things; all wisdom, peace, joy, love: the whole treasures of holiness and happiness: all that God hath prepared for them that love him.

21. But that your prayer may have its full weight with God, see that ye be in charity with

all men. For otherwiſe, it is more likely to bring a curſe than a bleſſing on your own head: nor can you expect to receive any bleſſing from God, while you have not charity towards your neighbour. Therefore let this hinderance be removed without delay. Confirm your love towards one another, and towards all men. And love them, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. "Therefore all things whatſoever ye would, that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo unto them: for this is the Law and the Prophets."

22. This is that royal law, that golden rule of Mercy as well as Juſtice, which even the heathen Emperor cauſed to be written, over the gate of his palace: a rule, which many believe to be naturally engraved on the minds of every one that comes into the world. And thus much is certain, that it commends itſelf, as ſoon as heard to every man's conſcience and underſtanding: inſomuch that no man can knowingly offend againſt it, without carrying his condemnation in his own breaſt.

23. "This is the law and the Prophets." Whatſoever is written in that law which God of old revealed to mankind; and whatſoever precepts God has given by his holy Prophets, which have been ſince the world began, they are all ſummed up in thoſe few words, they are all contained in this ſhort direction. And this rightly underſtood, compriſes the whole of that Religion which our Lord came to eſtabliſh upon earth.

24. It may be underſtood, either in a poſitive or negative ſenſe. If underſtood in a negative ſenſe,

ſenſe, the meaning is. "Whatever ye would not that men ſhould do to you, do not ye unto them." Here is a plain rule, always ready at hand, always eaſy to be applied. In all caſes relating to your neighbour, make his caſe your own. Suppoſe the circumſtances to be changed, and yourſelf to be juſt as he is now. And then beware that you indulge no temper or thought, that no word paſs out of your lips, that you take no ſtep which you ſhould have condemned in him, upon ſuch a change of circumſtances. If underſtood in a direct poſitive ſenſe, the plain meaning of it is, "Whatſoever you could reaſonably deſire of him, ſuppoſing yourſelf to be in his circumſtances, that do, to the uttermoſt of your power, to every child of man."

25. To apply this in one or two obvious inſtances. It is clear to every man's own conſcience, we would not that others ſhould judge us, ſhould cauſeleſsly or lightly think evil of us. Much leſs would we that any ſhould ſpeak evil of us, ſhould publiſh our real faults or infirmities. Apply this to yourſelf. Do not unto another what you would not he ſhould do unto you; and you will never more judge your neighbour, never cauſeleſsly or lightly think evil of any one. Much leſs will you ſpeak evil; you will never mention even the real faults of an abſent perſon, unleſs ſo far as you are convinced, it is abſolutely needful, for the good of other ſouls.

26. Again: we would that all men ſhould love and eſteem us, and behave towards us, according to juſtice, mercy, and truth. And we may

may reaſonably deſire, that they ſhould do us all the good they can do, without injuring themſelves: yea, that in outward things (according to the known rule) their ſuperfluities ſhould give way to our conveniencies, their conveniencies to our neceſſities, and their neceſſities to our extremities. Now then, let us walk by the ſame rule: let us do unto all, as we would they ſhould do to us. Let us love and honour all men. Let juſtice, mercy and truth, govern all our minds and actions. Let our ſuperfluities give way to our neighbour's conveniencies: (and who then will have any ſuperfluities left?) Our conveniencies to our neighbour's neceſſities, our neceſſities to his extremities.

27. This is pure and genuine morality. This do and thou ſhalt live. "As many as walk by this rule, Peace be to them and mercy: for they are "the Iſrael of God." But then be it obſerved, none can walk by this rule, (nor ever did from the beginning of the world) none can love his neighbour as himſelf, unleſs he firſt love God. And none can love God, unleſs he believe in Chriſt, unleſs he have redemption through his blood, and the Spirit of God bearing witneſs with his ſpirit, that he is a child of God. Faith therefore is ſtill the root of all, of preſent as well as future ſalvation. Still we muſt ſay to every ſinner, Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved. Thou ſhalt be ſaved now, that thou mayeſt be ſaved for ever; ſaved on earth, that thou mayeſt be ſaved in heaven. Believe in him and thy faith will work by love. Thou wilt love the Lord thy God, becauſe he hath loved thee: thou wilt love thy neighbour

neighbour as thyſelf. And then it will be thy glory and joy, to exert and increaſe this love, not barely abſtaining from what is contrary thereto, from every unkind thought, word, and action, but by ſhewing all that kindneſs to every man, which thou wouldſt he ſhould ſhew unto thee.

SERMON

SERMON XXX.

DISCOURSE the ELEVENTH, upon our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VII. 13, 14.

Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

OUR Lord having warned us of the dangers, which eaſily beſet us at our firſt entrance upon real Religion, the hinderances which naturally ariſe from within, from the wickedneſs of our own hearts: now proceeds to apprize us of the hinderances from without, particularly ill example and ill advice. By one or the other of theſe, thouſands who once ran well, have drawn back

back unto perdition: yea, many of thoſe who were not novices in Religion, who had made ſome progreſs in righteouſneſs. His caution therefore againſt theſe, he preſſes upon us, with all poſſible earneſtneſs, and repeats again and again, in a variety of expreſſions, leſt by any means we ſhould let it ſlip. Thus, effectually to guard againſt the former, "Enter ye in," ſaith he, "at the ſtrait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat: Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it." To ſecure us from the latter, "Beware, ſaith he, of falſe prophets." We ſhall at preſent conſider the former only.

2. "Enter ye in, (ſaith our bleſſed Lord,) at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

3. In theſe words we may obſerve, firſt, The inſeparable properties of the way to hell: "Wide is the gate, broad the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat:" ſecondly, The inſeparable properties of the way to heaven: "Strait is that gate, and few there be that find it:" thirdly, A ſerious exhortation grounded thereon, "Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate."

I. 1. We may obſerve, firſt, The inſeparable properties of the way to hell. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat."

2. Wide

2. Wide indeed is the gate, and broad the way that leadeth to deſtruction. For ſin is the gate of hell, and wickedneſs the way to deſtruction. And how wide a gate is that of ſin? How broad is the way of wickedneſs! The *commandment* of God *is exceeding broad*, as extending not only to all our actions, but every word which goeth out of our lips, yea, every thought that riſes in our heart. And ſin is equally broad with the commandment, ſeeing any breach of the commandment is ſin. Yea, rather it is a thouſand times broader: ſince there is only one way of keeping the commandment: for we do not properly keep it, unleſs both the thing done, the manner of doing it, and all the other circumſtances are right. But there are a thouſand ways of breaking every commandment: ſo that this gate is wide indeed.

3. To conſider this a little more particularly. How wide do thoſe parent ſins extend, from which all the reſt derive their being? That carnal mind which is enmity againſt God, pride of heart, ſelf-will and love of the world? Can we fix any bounds to them? Do they not diffuſe themſelves through all our thoughts, and mingle with all our tempers? Are they not the leaven which leavens, more or leſs, the whole maſs of our affections? May we not, on a cloſe and faithful examination of ourſelves, perceive theſe roots of bitterneſs, continually ſpringing up, infecting all our words, and tainting all our actions? And how innumerable an offſpring do they bring forth, in every age and nation? Even enough to cover the whole earth with darkneſs *and cruel habitations.*

4. O! who

4. O! who is able to reckon up their accurſed fruits? To count all the ſins, whether againſt God or our neighbour, not which imagination might paint, but which may be matter of daily, melancholy experience? Nor need we range over all the earth to find them. Survey any one kingdom, any ſingle country, or city, or town, and how plenteous is this harveſt? And let it not be one of thoſe, which are ſtill overſpread with Mahometan or Pagan darkneſs: but of thoſe which name the name of Chriſt, which profeſs to ſee the light of his glorious goſpel. Go no farther than the kingdom to which we belong, the city wherein we are now. We call ourſelves Chriſtians: yea, and that of the pureſt ſort; we are Proteſtants; reformed Chriſtians! But alas! who ſhall carry on the reformation of our opinions into our hearts and lives? Is there not a cauſe? For how innumerable are our ſins? And thoſe of the deepeſt dye? Do not the groſſeſt abominations of every kind, abound among us from day to day? Do not ſins of every ſort cover the land, as the waters cover the ſea? Who can count them? Rather go and count the drops of rain, or the ſands on the ſea-ſhore. So *wide is the gate*, ſo *broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction.*

5. *And many there be that go in at* that gate: many who walk in that way. Almoſt as many as go in at the gate of death, as ſink into the chambers of the grave. For it cannot be denied, (though neither can we acknowledge it but with ſhame and ſorrow of heart) that even in this, which is called a Chriſtian country, the generality of every age and ſex, of every profeſſion and employment, of every rank and degree,

high and low, rich and poor, are walking in the way of deſtruction. The far greater part of the inhabitants of this city, to this day live in ſin; in ſome palpable, habitual, known tranſgreſſion of the law they profeſs to obſerve: yea, in ſome outward tranſgreſſion, ſome groſs, viſible kind of ungodlineſs or unrighteouſneſs; ſome open violation of their duty, either to God or man. Theſe then, none can deny, are all in the way that leadeth to deſtruction. Add to theſe thoſe who *have a name* indeed *that they live*, but were never yet alive to God: thoſe that outwardly appear fair to men, but are inwardly full of unclean.neſs: full of pride, or vanity; of anger, or revenge; of ambition, or covetouſneſs: lovers of themſelves, lovers of the world, lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God. Theſe indeed may be highly eſteemed of men; but they are an abomination to the Lord. And how greatly will theſe ſaints of the world, ſwell the number of the children of hell? Yea, and all, whatever they be in other reſpects, whether they have more or leſs of the form of godlineſs, who "being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs," as the ground of their reconciliation to God and acceptance with him, of conſequence have not "ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith." Now all theſe things joined together in one, how terribly true is our Lord's aſſertion, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be who go in thereat."

6. Nor does this only concern the vulgar herd, the poor, baſe, ſtupid part of mankind. Men

Men of eminence in the world, men who have many fields and yoke of oxen, do not desire to be excused from this. On the contrary, *many wise men after the flesh*, according to the human methods of judging, *many mighty*, in power, in courage, in riches, many *noble are called:* called into the broad way, by the world, the flesh, and the devil; and they are not disobedient to that calling. Yea, the higher they are raised in fortune and power, the deeper do they sink into wickedness. The more blessings they have received from God, the more sins do they commit: using their honour or riches, their learning or wisdom, not as means of working out their salvation, but rather of excelling in vice, and so insuring their own destruction.

II. 1. And the very reason why many of these go on so securely in the *broad way*, is because it is broad: not considering that this is the inseparable property of the way to destruction. "Many there be," saith our Lord, "who go in thereat:" for the very reason why they should flee from it: even "because strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

2. This is an inseparable property of the way to heaven. So narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, unto life everlasting; so strait the gate, that nothing unclean, nothing unholy can enter. No sinner can pass through that gate, until he is saved from all his sins. Not only from his outward sins; from his evil "conversation received by tradition from his fathers." It will not suffice, that he hath *ceased to do evil*, and *learned to do well*. He must not only be saved from all sinful

actions, and from all evil and useless discourse; but inwardly changed, thoroughly renewed in the spirit of his mind. Otherwise he cannot pass through the gate of life, he cannot enter into glory.

3. For "narrow is the way that leadeth unto life:" the way of universal holiness. Narrow indeed is the way of poverty of spirit, the way of holy mourning: the way of meekness, and that of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Narrow is the way of mercifulness, of love unfeigned; the way of purity of heart; of doing good unto all men, and of gladly suffering evil, all manner of evil for righteousness sake.

4. "And few there be that find it." Alas! how few find even the way to heathen honesty? How few are there, that do nothing to another, which they would not another should do unto them? How few, that are clear before God, from acts either of injustice or unkindness? How few, that do not *offend with their tongue;* that speak nothing unkind, nothing untrue? What a small proportion of mankind, are innocent even of outward transgressions? And how much smaller a proportion have their hearts right before God? Clean and holy in his sight? Where are they, whom his all-searching eye, discerns to be truly humble? To abhor themselves in dust and ashes, in the presence of God their Saviour? To be deeply and steadily serious, feeling their wants, and *passing the time of their sojourning with fear?* Truly meek and gentle, never *overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good?* Thoroughly athirst for God, and continually panting after a renewal in his likeness? How thinly are they scattered over the earth, whose souls are enlarged in love

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to all mankind? And who love God with all their ſtrength, who have given him their heart, and deſire nothing elſe in earth or heaven? How few are thoſe lovers of God and man, that ſpend their whole ſtrength in doing good unto all men? And are ready to ſuffer all things, yea, death itſelf, to ſave one ſoul from eternal death?

5. But while ſo few are found in the way of life, and ſo many in the way of deſtruction, there is great danger, leſt the torrent of examples ſhould bear us away with them. Even as a ſingle example, if it be always in our ſight, is apt to make much impreſſion upon us: eſpecially when it has nature on its ſide; when it falls in with our own inclinations. How great then muſt be the force of ſo numerous examples, continually before our eyes; and all conſpiring together with our own hearts, to carry us down the ſtream of nature? How difficult muſt it be, to ſtem the tide, and to keep ourſelves *unſpotted from the world?*

6. What heightens the difficulty ſtill more is, that they are not the rude and ſenſeleſs part of mankind, at leaſt not theſe alone, who ſet us the example, who throng the downward way: but the polite, the well-bred, the genteel, the wiſe, the men who underſtand the world: the men of knowledge, of deep and various learning, the rational, the eloquent! Theſe are all, or nearly all, againſt us. And how ſhall we ſtand againſt theſe? Does not their tongues drop manna? and have they not learnt all the art of ſoft perſuaſion; and of reaſoning too? for theſe are verſed in all controverſies and ſtrife of words. It is therefore a ſmall thing with them to prove, that the way is *right*, becauſe it is *broad*: that he who follows

a multitude, cannot do evil, but only he who will not follow them: that your way muſt be *wrong* becauſe it is *narrow*; and becauſe there are ſo few that find it. Theſe will make it clear to a demonſtration, that evil is good, and good is evil: that the way of holineſs is the way of deſtruction, and the way of the world, the only way to heaven.

7. O how can unlearned and ignorant men, maintain their cauſe againſt ſuch opponents! And yet theſe are not all with whom they muſt contend, however unequal to the taſk. For there are many mighty, and noble, and powerful men, as well as wiſe, in the road that leadeth to deſtruction. And theſe have a ſhorter way of confuting, than that of reaſon and argument. They uſually apply, not to the underſtanding, but to the fears of any that oppoſe them. A method that ſeldom fails of ſucceſs, even where argument profits nothing: as lying level to the capacities of all men: for all can fear, whether they can reaſon or no. And all who have not a firm truſt in God, a ſure reliance both on his power and love, cannot but fear to give any diſguſt to thoſe, who have the power of the world in their hands. What wonder therefore if the example of theſe is a law, to all who know not God?

8. Many rich are likewiſe in the broad way. And theſe apply to the hopes of men, and to all their fooliſh deſires, as ſtrongly and effectually, as the mighty and noble to their fears. So that hardly can you hold on in the way of the kingdom, unleſs you are dead to all below, unleſs you are crucified to the world and the world crucified to you, unleſs you deſire nothing more but God.

9. For how dark, how uncomfortable, how forbidding is the proſpect on the oppoſite ſide! A ſtrait

A ſtrait gate! A narrow way! And few finding that gate! Few walking in the way. Beſides, even thoſe few, are not wiſe men, not men of learning or eloquence. They are not able to reaſon either ſtrongly or clearly: they cannot propoſe an argument to any advantage. They know not how to prove what they profeſs to believe; or to explain even what they ſay they experience. Surely ſuch advocates as they, will never recommend, but rather diſcredit the cauſe they have eſpouſed.

10. Add to this, that they are not noble, not honourable men: (if they were, you might bear with their folly.) They are men of no intereſt, no authority, of no account in the world. They are mean and baſe, low in life: and ſuch as have no power, if they had the will to hurt you. Therefore there is nothing at all to be feared from them: and there is nothing at all to hope. For the greater part of them may ſay, "Silver and gold have I none:" at leaſt a very moderate ſhare. Nay, ſome of them have ſcarce food to eat, or raiment to put on. For this reaſon, as well as becauſe their ways are not like thoſe of other men, they are every where ſpoken againſt, are deſpiſed, have their names caſt out as evil, are variouſly perſecuted, and treated as the filth and offſcouring of the world. So that both your fears, your hopes, and all your deſires, (except thoſe which you have immediately from God) yea, all your natural paſſions, continually incline you to return into the broad way.

III. 1. Therefore it is, that our Lord ſo earneſtly exhorts, "Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate." Or (as the ſame exhortation is elſewhere expreſſed) *Strive to enter in.* Ἀγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν, *as in*

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an agony. "For many," saith our Lord, "shall seek to enter in," indolently strive, "and shall not be able."

2. It is true, he intimates what may seem another reason for this, for their *not being able to enter in*, in the words which immediately follow these. For after he had said, "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," he subjoins, "When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without," ἀρξησθε ἔξω ἑστάναι. Rather, *Ye stand without;* for ἀρξησθε seems to be only an elegant expletive:) "and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not. Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity," Luke xiii. 26, &c.

3. It may appear, upon a transient view of these words, that their delaying to seek at all, rather than their manner of seeking, was the reason why they were not able to enter in. But it comes, in effect, to the same thing. They were therefore commanded to depart, because they had been *workers of iniquity*, because they had walked in the broad road: in other words, because they had not agonized to enter in at the strait gate. Probably they did *seek*, before the door was shut: but that did not suffice. And they did *strive*, after the door was shut. But then it was too late.

4. Therefore, *strive* ye now, in this your day, *to enter in at the strait gate.* And in order thereto, settle it in your heart, and let it be ever uppermost in your thoughts, That if you are in a broad way, you are in the way that leadeth to destruction. If many go with you, as sure as God

God is true, both they and you are going to hell. If you are walking as the generality of men walk, you are walking to the bottomleſs pit. Are many wiſe, many rich, many mighty, or noble, travelling with you in the ſame way? By this token, without going any farther, you know, it does not lead to life. Here is a ſhort, a plain, and infallible rule, before you enter into particulars. In whatever profeſſion you are engaged, you muſt be ſingular or be damned. The way to hell has nothing ſingular in it; but the way to heaven is ſingularity all over: if you move but one ſtep towards God, you are not as other men are. But regard not this. It is far better to ſtand alone, than to fall into the pit. Run then with patience the race which is ſet before thee, though thy companions therein are but few. They will not always be ſo. Yet a little while and thou wilt "come to an innumerable company of angels, to the great aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect."

5. Now then *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, being penetrated with the deepeſt ſenſe, of the inexpreſſible danger your ſouls are in, ſo long as you are in a broad way: ſo long as you are void of poverty of ſpirit, and all that inward Religion, which the many, the rich, the wiſe account madneſs. "Strive to enter in," being pierced with ſorrow and ſhame, for having ſo long run on with the unthinking crowd, utterly neglecting if not deſpiſing that holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord. Strive as in an agony of holy fear, leſt, *a promiſe being made you of entering into his reſt*, even that *reſt which remaineth for the people of God*, you ſhould nevertheleſs

come

come ſhort of it. Strive in all the fervor of deſire, with *groanings that cannot be uttered.* Strive by prayer without ceaſing, at all times, in all places lifting up your heart to God, and giving him no reſt, till you *awake up after his likeneſs* and are *ſatisfied with it.*

6. To conclude, "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate," not only by this agony of ſoul, of conviction, of ſorrow, of ſhame, of deſire, of fear, of unceaſing prayer, but likewiſe by *ordering* thy *converſation aright*, by walking with all thy ſtrength, in all the ways of God, the way of innocence, of piety and mercy. Abſtain from all appearance of evil: do all poſſible good to all men: deny thyſelf, thy own will, in all things, and take up thy croſs daily. Be ready to cut off thy right hand, to pluck out thy right eye and caſt it from thee: to ſuffer the loſs of goods, friends, health, all things on earth, ſo thou mayeſt enter into the kingdom of heaven.

SERM.

SERMON XXXI.

DISCOURSE the TWELFTH upon our LORD's SERMON on the MOUNT.

MATTHEW VII. 15—20.

Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.
Wherefore by their fruits, ye shall know them.

1. IT is scarce possible to express or conceive, what multitudes of souls run on to destruction, because they would not be persuaded to walk

walk in a *narrow* way, even though it were the way to everlasting salvation. And the same thing we may still observe daily. Such is the folly and madness of mankind, that thousands of men still rush on in the way to hell, only because it is a *broad* way. They walk in it themselves, because others do: because so many perish, they will add to the number. Such is the amazing influence of example, over the weak, miserable children of men! It continually peoples the regions of death, and drowns numberless souls in everlasting perdition.

2. To warn mankind of this, to guard as many as possible against this spreading contagion, God has commanded his watchmen to cry aloud, and shew the people the danger they are in. For this end he has sent his servants the Prophets, in their succeeding generations, to point out the narrow path, and exhort all men, not to be conformed to this world. But what if the watchmen themselves fall into the snare, against which they should warn others? What if *the Prophets prophesy deceits?* If they *cause the people to err from the way?* What shall be done, if they point out as the way to eternal life, what is in truth the way to eternal death? And exhort others to walk, as they do themselves, in the broad, not the narrow way?

3. Is this an unheard of, is it an uncommon thing? Nay, God knoweth, it is not. The instances of it are almost innumerable. We may find them in every age and nation. But how terrible is this? When the Ambassadors of God, turn agents for the devil? When they who are commissioned to teach men the way to heaven, do in fact teach them the way to hell? These

are like the locuſts of Egypt, "which eat up the reſidue that had eſcaped, that had remained after the hail." They devour even the reſidue of men that had eſcaped, that were not deſtroyed by ill example. It is not therefore without cauſe that our wiſe and gracious Maſter, ſo ſolemnly cautions us againſt them: "Beware, ſaith he, of falſe Prophets, which come to you in ſheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

4. A caution this of the utmoſt importance.—That it may the more effectually ſink into our hearts, let us enquire, firſt, Who theſe falſe Prophets are: Secondly, What appearance they put on: and thirdly, How we may know what they really are, notwithſtanding their fair appearance.

I. 1. We are, firſt to enquire, Who theſe falſe Prophets are. And this is needful to do the more diligently, becauſe theſe very men have ſo laboured to *wreſt this ſcripture, to their own* (though not only their own) *deſtruction*. In order therefore to cut off all diſpute, I ſhall raiſe no duſt (as the manner of ſome is) neither uſe any looſe, rhetorical exclamations, to deceive the hearts of the ſimple; but ſpeak rough, plain truths, ſuch as none can deny, who has either underſtanding or modeſty left: and ſuch truths, as have the cloſeſt connexion, with the whole tenor of the preceding diſcourſe. Whereas too many have interpreted theſe words, without any regard to all that went before: as if they bore no manner of relation to the ſermon, in the cloſe of which they ſtand.

2. By *Prophets* here (as in many other paſſages of ſcripture, particularly in the New Teſtament) are meant, not thoſe who foretel things to come, but thoſe who ſpeak in the name of God: thoſe

men who profeſs to be ſent of God, to teach others the way to heaven.

Thoſe are *falſe Prophets*, who teach a falſe way to heaven, a way which does not lead thither. Or (which comes in the end to the ſame point) who do not teach the true.

3. Every broad way is infallibly a falſe one. Therefore this is one plain, ſure rule, "They who teach men to walk in a broad way, a way that many walk in, are *falſe Prophets*."

Again, the true way to heaven is a narrow way. Therefore this is another plain, ſure rule, "They who do not teach men to walk in a narrow way, to be ſingular, are *falſe Prophets*."

4. To be more particular. The only true way to heaven, is that pointed out in the preceding ſermon. Therefore they are *falſe Prophets* who do not teach men to walk in *this way*.

Now the way to heaven pointed out in the preceding Sermon, is the way of lowlineſs, mourning, meekneſs, and holy deſire, love of God and of our neighbour, doing good, and ſuffering evil for Chriſt's ſake. They are therefore *falſe Prophets*, who teach us the way to heaven, any other way than *this*.

5. It matters not, what they call that other way. They may call it *faith*, or *good works*: or *faith and works*: or *repentance*: or *repentance, faith, and new obedience*. All theſe are good works. But if under theſe, or any other terms whatever, they teach men any way diſtinct from *this*, they are properly *falſe Prophets*.

6. How much more do they fall under that condemnation, who ſpeak evil of this good way? But above all, they who teach the directly oppoſite way? The way of pride, of levity, of paſſion, of

of worldly desires, of loving pleasure more than God, of unkindness to our neighbour, of unconcern for good works, and suffering no evil, no persecution for righteousness sake?

7. If it be asked, Why who ever did teach this? Or who does teach it, as the way to heaven? I answer, Ten thousand wise and honourable men: even all those, of whatever denomination, who encourage the proud, the trifler, the passionate, the lover of the world, the man of pleasure, the unjust or unkind, the easy, careless, harmless, useless creature, the man who suffers no reproach for righteousness-sake, to imagine he is in the way to heaven. These are *false Prophets* in the highest sense of the word. These are traitors both to God and man. These are no other than the first-born of Satan: the eldest sons of Apollyon, the destroyer. These are far above the rank of ordinary cut-throats; for they murder the souls of men. They are continually peopling the realms of night: and whenever they follow the poor souls whom they have destroyed, *Hell* shall be *moved from beneath, to meet them at their coming.*

II. 1 But do they come now, in their own shape? By no means. If it were so, they could not destroy. You would take the alarm, and flee for your life. Therefore they put on a quite contrary appearance: (which was the second thing to be considered.) "They come to you in sheep's clothing, altho' inwardly they are ravening wolves."

2. "They come to you in sheep's clothing;" that is, with an appearance of harmlessness. They come in the most mild, inoffensive manner, without any mark or token of enmity. Who can imagine, that these quiet creatures, would do any hurt to any one? Perhaps they may not be so

zealous and active in doing good, as one would wish they were. However, you see no reason to suspect, that they have even the desire to do any harm. But this is not all:

3. They come, secondly, with an appearance of usefulness. Indeed to this, to do good they are particularly called. They are set apart for this very thing. They are particularly commissioned, to watch over your soul, and to train you up to eternal life. It is their whole business, to "go about doing good, and healing those that are oppressed of the devil." And you have been always accustomed to look upon them in this light, as messengers of God, sent to bring you a blessing.

4. They come, thirdly, with an appearance of Religion. All they do, is for conscience sake! They assure you, it is out of mere zeal for God, that they are making God a liar. It is out of pure concern for Religion, that they would destroy it, root and branch. All they speak, is only from a love of truth, and a fear lest it should suffer. And, it may be, from a regard for the church, and a desire to defend her from all her enemies.

5. Above all, they come with an appearance of love. They take all these pains, only for *your* good. They should not trouble themselves about you, but that they have a kindness for you. They will make large professions of their good-will, of their concern for the danger you are in, and of their earnest desire, to preserve you from error, from being entangled in new and mischievous doctrines. They should be very sorry to see one who *means* so well, hurried into any extreme, perplexed with strange and unintelligible notions, or deluded into enthusiasm. Therefore it is, that they advise you, to keep still, in the plain middle way: and

to

to beware of *being righteous overmuch*, leſt you ſhould *deſtroy yourſelf*.

III. 1. But how may we know, what they really are, notwithſtanding their fair appearance? This was the third thing into which it was propoſed to enquire.

Our bleſſed Lord ſaw how needful it was for all men to know *falſe Prophets*, however diſguiſed. He ſaw, likewiſe, how unable moſt men were, to deduce a truth through a long train of conſequences. He therefore gives us a ſhort and plain rule, eaſy to be underſtood by men of the meaneſt capacities, and eaſy to be applied upon all occaſions, "Ye ſhall know them by their fruits."

2. Upon all occaſions you may eaſily apply this rule. In order to know whether any who ſpeak in the name of God, are falſe or true Prophets, it is eaſy to obſerve, firſt, What are the fruits of their doctrine, as to themſelves? What effect has it had upon their lives? Are they holy and unblameable in all things? What effect has it had upon their hearts? Does it appear by the general tenor of their converſation that their tempers are holy, heavenly, divine? That the mind is in them which was in Chriſt Jeſus? That they are meek, lowly, patient, lovers of God and man, and zealous of good works?

3. You may eaſily obſerve, ſecondly, What are the fruits of their doctrine, as to thoſe that hear them? In many, at leaſt, though not in all: For the Apoſtles themſelves did not convert all that heard them. Have theſe the mind that was in Chriſt? And do they walk as he alſo walked? And was it by hearing theſe men, that they began ſo to do? Were they inwardly and outwardly wicked, till they heard them? If ſo, it is a manifeſt proof, that thoſe are true Pro-

phets, Teachers ſent of God. But if it is not ſo, if they do not effectually teach either themſelves or others to love and ſerve God; it is a manifeſt proof, that they are falſe Prophets; that God hath not ſent them.

4. An hard ſaying this? How few can bear it? This our Lord was ſenſible of, and therefore condeſcends to prove it at large, by ſeveral clear and convincing arguments. "Do men, ſays he, gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles?" ver. 16. Do you expect that theſe evil men ſhould bring forth good fruit? As well might you expect that thorns ſhould bring forth grapes, or that figs ſhould grow upon thiſtles! "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit," ver. 17. Every true Prophet, every Teacher whom I have ſent, bringeth forth the good fruit of holineſs. But a falſe Prophet, a Teacher whom I have not ſent, brings forth only ſin and wickedneſs. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." A true Prophet, a Teacher ſent from God, does not bring forth good fruit, ſometimes only, but always; not accidently, but by a kind of neceſſity. In like manner, a falſe Prophet, one whom God hath not ſent, does not bring forth evil fruit, accidentally or ſometimes only, but always and of neceſſity. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the fire," ver. 19. Such infallibly will be the lot of thoſe Prophets, who bring not forth good fruit, who do not ſave ſouls from ſin, who do not bring ſinners to repentance. "Wherefore" let this ſtand as an eternal rule, "By their fruits ye

ſhall

ſhall know them," ver. 20. They who in fact bring the proud, paſſionate, unmerciful, lovers of the world, to be lowly, gentle, lovers of God and man; they are true Prophets, they are ſent from God, who therefore confirms their word. On the other hand, they whoſe hearers, if unrighteous before, remain unrighteous ſtill, or at leaſt, void of any righteouſneſs which "exceeds the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees:" they are falſe Prophets; they are not ſent of God; therefore their words fall to the ground. And without a miracle of grace, they and their hearers together, will fall into the bottomleſs pit.

5. O *beware of* theſe *falſe Prophets!* For though they *come in ſheep's clothing*, yet *inwardly they are ravening wolves*. They only deſtroy and devour the flock: they tear them in pieces, if there is none to help them. They will not, cannot lead you in the way to heaven. How ſhould they? When they know it not themſelves. O beware they do not turn you out of the way, and cauſe you to *loſe what you have wrought*.

6. But perhaps you will aſk, If there is ſuch danger in hearing them, ought I to hear them at all? It is a weighty queſtion, ſuch as deſerves the deepeſt conſideration, and ought not to be anſwered, but upon the calmeſt thought, the moſt deliberate reflection. For many years, I have been almoſt afraid, to ſpeak at all concerning it: being unable to determine one way or another, or to give any judgment upon it. Many reaſons there are which readily occur, and incline me to ſay, "Hear them not." And yet what our Lord ſpeaks concerning the falſe Prophets of his own times, ſeems to imply the contrary. "Then ſpake Jeſus unto the multitude and to his diſciples,

disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," are the ordinary, stated Teachers in your Church: "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their works; for they say and do not." Now that these were false Prophets in the highest sense, our Lord has shewn during the whole course of his ministry: as indeed he does in those very words, "They say and do not." Therefore by their fruits his disciples could not but know them, seeing they were open to the view of all men. Accordingly he warns them again and again, to *beware of* these *false Prophets*. And yet he does not forbid them to hear even these. Nay, in effect commands them so to do, in those words, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." For unless they heard them, they could not know, much less *observe whatsoever they bad them do*. Here then our Lord himself gives a plain direction, both to his Apostles and the whole multitude, in some circumstances, to hear even false Prophets, known and acknowledged so to be.

7. But perhaps it will be said, he only directed to hear them, when they read the Scripture to the congregation. I answer, at the same time that they thus read the Scripture, they generally expounded it too. And here is no kind of intimation, that they were to hear the one, and not the other also. Nay the very terms, "All things whatsoever they bid you observe," exclude any such limitation.

8. Again, unto them, unto false Prophets, undeniably such, is frequently committed (O grief to speak! For surely these things ought not so to be) the administration of the sacraments

ments alſo. To direct men therefore, not to hear them, would be in effect to cut them off from the ordinances of God. But this we dare not do, conſidering the validity of the ordinance doth not depend on the goodneſs of him that adminiſters, but on the faithfulneſs of him that ordained it, who will and doth meet us in his appointed ways. Therefore on this account likewiſe I ſcruple to ſay, hear not even the falſe Prophets. Even by theſe who are under a curſe themſelves, God can, and doth give us his bleſſing. For the bread which they break, we have experimentally known to be "the communion of the body of Chriſt." And the cup which God bleſt, even by their unhallowed lips, was to us the communion of the blood of Chriſt.

9. All therefore which I can ſay is this: In any particular caſe, wait upon God by humble and earneſt prayer, and then act according to the beſt light you have. Act according to what you are perſuaded, upon the whole, will be moſt for your ſpiritual advantage. Take great care that you do not judge raſhly; that you do not lightly think any to be falſe Prophets. And when you have full proof, ſee that no anger or contempt have any place in your heart. After this, in the preſence and in the fear of God, determine for yourſelf. I can only ſay, if by experience you find, that the hearing them hurts your ſoul, then hear them not: then quietly refrain, and hear thoſe that profit you. If on the other hand, you find, it does not hurt your ſoul, you then may hear them ſtill. Only *take heed how you hear: beware of* them and of their doctrine. Hear with fear and trembling, leſt *you* ſhould be deceived,

deceived, and given up, like them, to a ſtrong deluſion. As they continually mingle truth and lies, how eaſy may you take in both together? Hear with fervent and continual prayer, to him who alone teacheth man wiſdom. And ſee that you bring whatever you hear, *to the law and to the teſtimony*. Receive nothing untried, nothing till it is weighed in the balance of the ſanctuary. Believe nothing they ſay, unleſs it is clearly confirmed by plain paſſages of Holy Writ. Wholly reject whatſoever differs therefrom, whatever is not confirmed thereby. And in particular, reject, with the utmoſt abhorrence, whatſoever is deſcribed as the way of ſalvation, that is either different from, or ſhort of the way, our Lord has marked out in the foregoing diſcourſe.

10. I cannot conclude, without addreſſing a few plain words, to thoſe of whom we have now been ſpeaking. O ye falſe Prophets, O ye dry bones, hear ye, for once, the word of the Lord. How long will ye lie in the name of God? Saying, God hath ſpoken: and God hath not ſpoken by you. How long will ye pervert the right ways of the Lord, putting darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs? How long will ye teach the way of death, and call it the way of life? How long, will ye deliver to Satan the ſouls, whom ye profeſs to bring unto God?

11. "Wo unto you, ye blind leaders of the blind? For ye ſhut the kingdom of heaven againſt men. Ye neither go in yourſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entering to go in." Them that would ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, ye call back into the broad way. Them that have ſcarce gone one ſtep in the ways of God, you deviliſhly caution againſt *going too far*. Them

Them that just begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, you warn, not to be *righteous overmuch*. Thus you cause them to stumble at the very threshold; yea, to fall, and rise no more. O wherefore do ye this? What profit is there in their blood, when they go down to the pit? Miserable profit to you. "They shall perish in their iniquity: but their blood will God require at your hands!"

12. Where are your eyes? Where is your understanding? Have ye deceived others, till you have deceived yourself also? Who hath required this at your hands, to *teach* a way which ye never *knew?* Are you *given up to so strong a delusion*, that ye not only teach, but *believe a lie?* And can you possibly believe, that God hath sent you? That ye are *his* Messengers? Nay; if the Lord had sent you, the *work of the Lord* would *prosper in your hand*. As the Lord liveth, if ye were Messengers of God, he would *confirm the word of his Messengers*. But the work of the Lord doth not prosper in your hand: you bring no sinners to repentance. The Lord doth not confirm your word: for you save no souls from death.

13. How can you possibly evade the force of our Lord's words? So full, so strong, so express? How can ye evade *knowing* yourselves *by your fruits?* Evil fruits of evil trees! And how should it be otherwise! "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Take this to yourselves, ye to whom it belongs. O ye barren trees, why cumber ye the ground? "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." See ye not, that here is no exception? Take knowledge then, ye are not good trees: for ye do not bring forth good fruit. "But a corrupt tree bringeth forth

forth evil fruit." And so have ye done from the beginning. Your speaking as from God has only confirmed them that heard you, in the tempers, if not works of the devil. O take warning of him in whose name ye speak, before the sentence he hath pronounced take place. "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

14. My dear brethren, harden not your hearts. You have too long shut your eyes against the light. Open them now before it is too late; before you are cast into outer darkness. Let not any temporal consideration weigh with you: for eternity is at stake. Ye have run before you were sent. O go no farther. Do not persist to damn yourselves and them that hear you! You have no fruit of your labours. And why is this? Even because the Lord is not with you. But can you go this warfare at your own cost? It cannot be. Then humble yourselves before him. Cry unto him out of the dust, that he may first quicken *thy* soul: give *thee* the faith that worketh by love: that is lowly and meek, pure and merciful, zealous of good works; rejoicing in tribulation, in reproach, in distress, in persecution for righteousness sake. So shall "the Spirit of glory and of Christ rest upon thee," and it shall appear that God hath sent thee. So shalt thou indeed "do the work of an Evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry." So shall the word of God in thy mouth be "an hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces." It shall then be known by thy fruits, that thou art a Prophet of the Lord, even by the children whom God hath given thee. And having "turned many to righteousness, thou shalt shine as the stars for ever and ever!"

SERMON XXXII.

Discourse the Thirteenth, upon our LORD's Sermon on the Mount.

MATTHEW VII. 21—27.

Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? And in thy name have caſt out devils? And in thy name have done many wonderful works?

And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore, whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon a rock:

And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

1. OUR divine Teacher having declared the whole counsel of God, with regard to the way of salvation, and observed the chief hinderances of those who desire to walk therein: now closes the whole with these weighty words; thereby as it were setting his seal to his prophecy, and impressing his whole authority on what he had delivered, that it might stand firm to all generations.

2. For thus saith the Lord, that none may ever conceive, there is any other way than this, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity. Therefore every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

3. I design in the following discourse, First, to consider the case of him, who thus builds his house upon the sand: Secondly, To shew the wisdom of him who builds upon a rock: And thirdly,

thirdly, To conclude with a practical Application.

I. 1. And, firſt, I am to conſider the caſe of him who builds his houſe upon the ſand. It is concerning him our Lord ſaith, "Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven." And this is a decree which cannot paſs; which ſtandeth faſt for ever and ever. It therefore imports us in the higheſt degree, throughly to underſtand the force of theſe words. Now what are we to underſtand by that expreſſion, "That ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord?" It undoubtedly means, "that thinks of going to heaven by any other way than that which I have now deſcribed." It therefore implies, (to begin at the loweſt point) all good words, all verbal religion. It includes, whatever creeds we may rehearſe, whatever profeſſions of faith we make: whatever number of prayers we may repeat, whatever thankſgivings we read or ſay to God. We may ſpeak good of his name; and declare his loving-kindneſs to the children of men. We may be talking of all his mighty acts, and telling of his Salvation from day to day. By comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, we may ſhew the meaning of the oracles of God. We may explain the myſteries of his kingdom, which have been hid from the beginning of the world. We may ſpeak with the tongue of angels rather than men, concerning the deep things of God. We may proclaim to ſinners, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world." Yea, we may do this with ſuch a meaſure of the power of God, and ſuch demonſtration of his Spirit, as to ſave many ſouls from death, and hide a multitude of ſins. And yet it is very poſſible,

all this may be no more than, saying *Lord, Lord.* After I have thus successfully preached to others, still I myself may be a cast-away. I may in the hand of God, snatch many souls from hell, and yet drop into it when I have done. I may bring many others to the kingdom of heaven, and yet myself never enter there. Reader, if God hath ever blest my word to *thy* soul, pray that he may be merciful to *me* a sinner!

2. The saying, *Lord, Lord!* may, secondly, imply, The doing no harm. We may abstain from every presumptuous sin, from every kind of outward wickedness. We may refrain from all those ways of acting or speaking, which are forbidden in holy Writ. We may be able to say to all those among whom we live, Which of you convinceth me of sin? We may have a conscience void of any external offence, towards God and towards man. We may be clear of all uncleanness, ungodliness and unrighteousness, as to the outward act: or (as the Apostle testifies concerning himself) *touching the righteousness of the law*, i. e. outward righteousness, *blameless*. But yet we are not hereby justified. Still this is no more than saying, *Lord, Lord!* And if we go no farther than this, we shall never *enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

3. The saying, *Lord, Lord!* may imply, thirdly, Many of what are usually styled Good Works. A man may attend the supper of the Lord, may hear abundance of excellent sermons, and omit no opportunity of partaking all the other ordinances of God. I may do good to my neighbour, deal my bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with a garment. I may be so zealous of good works, as even to *give all my goods to feed the*

the poor. Yea, and I may do all this, with a desire to please God, and a real belief that I do please him thereby: (which is undeniably the case of those our Lord introduces, *saying unto* him, *Lord, Lord!*) and still I may have no part, in the glory which shall be revealed.

4. If any man marvels at this, let him acknowledge he is a stranger to the whole Religion of Jesus Christ: and in particular, to that perfect portraiture thereof, which he has set before us in this discourse. For how far short is all this, of that righteousness and true holiness, which he has described therein? How widely distant from that inward kingdom of heaven, which is now opened in the believing soul? Which is first sown in the heart as a grain of mustard-seed, but afterwards putteth forth great branches, on which grow all the fruits of righteousness, every good temper and word and work.

5. Yet as clearly as he had declared this, as frequently as he had repeated, That none who have not this kingdom of God, within them, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: our Lord well knew, that many would not receive this saying, and therefore confirms it yet again: *Many* (saith he: not one; not a few only: it is not a rare or an uncommon case) *shall say unto me in that day:* not only, We have said many prayers; we have spoken thy praise; we have refrained from evil; we have exercised ourselves in doing good: but what is abundantly more than this, "We have prophesied in thy name. In thy name have we cast out devils; in thy name done many wonderful works." *We have prophesied:* we have declared thy will to mankind; we have shewed sinners the way to peace and glory. And we have

done this, *in thy name*, according to the truth of thy gospel. Yea, and by thy authority, who didst confirm the word, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. For *in* or *by thy name*, by the power of thy word and of thy spirit, *have we cast out devils*; out of the souls which they had long claimed as their own, and whereof they had full and quiet possession. *And in thy name*, by thy power, not our own, *have we done many wonderful works*: insomuch that even *the dead heard the voice of the Son of God* speaking by us, and lived. *And then will I profess* even *unto them, I never knew you*: no not then, when you were *casting out devils in my name*. Even then I did not know you as my own: for your heart was not right toward God. Ye were not yourselves meek and lowly, ye were not lovers of God and of all mankind: ye were not renewed in the image of God. Ye were not holy as I am holy. *Depart from me, ye* who notwithstanding all this, are *workers of iniquity*; ἀνομίαν. Ye are transgressors of my law, my law of holy and perfect love.

6. It is to put this beyond all possibility of contradiction, that our Lord confirms it by that apposite comparison. "Every one, saith he, who heareth these sayings of mine and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house:" as they will surely do, sooner or later upon every soul of man: even the floods of outward affliction, or inward temptation; the storms of pride, anger, fear or desire. *And it fell, and great was the fall of it*: so that it perished for ever and ever. Such must

must be the portion of all, who rest in any thing short of that Religion, which is above described. And the *greater* will their *fall* be, because they *heard those sayings, and* yet *did them not.*

II. 1. I am, secondly, To shew the wisdom of him that doeth them, "that buildeth his house upon a rock." He indeed is wise, "who doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." He is truly wise, whose "righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." He is poor in spirit; knowing himself even as also he is known. He sees and feels all his sin, and all his guilt, till it is washed away by the atoning blood. He is conscious of his lost estate, of the wrath of God abiding on him, and of his utter inability to help himself, till he is filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is meek and gentle, patient toward all men, never "returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing," till he overcomes evil with good. His soul is athirst for nothing on earth, but only for God, the living God. He has bowels of love for all mankind, and is ready to lay down his life for his enemies. He loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength. He alone shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, who in this spirit doth good unto all men; and who being for this cause despised and rejected of men: being hated, reproached and persecuted, *rejoices and is exceeding glad*, knowing in whom he hath believed; and being assured, these light, momentary afflictions, will "work out for him an eternal weight of glory."

2. How

2. How truly wise is that man! He knows himself: an everlasting spirit, which came forth from God, and was sent down into an house of clay, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. He knows the world: the place in which he is to pass a few days or years, not as an inhabitant, but as a stranger and sojourner, in his way to the everlasting habitations: and accordingly he uses the world, as not abusing it, and as knowing the fashion of it passes away. He knows God, his father and his friend, the parent of all good, the center of the spirits of all flesh, the sole happiness of all intelligent beings. He sees, clearer than the light of the noonday sun, that this is the end of man. To glorify him who made him for himself, and to love and enjoy him for ever. And with equal clearness he sees the means to that end, to the enjoyment of God in glory, even now to know, to love, to imitate God, and to believe in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

3. He is a wise man, even in God's account; for "he buildeth his house upon a rock:" upon the Rock of Ages, the everlasting Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Fitly is he so called; for he changeth not. He is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." To him, both the man of God of old, and the Apostle citing his words, bear witness, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment: And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail," Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. Wise therefore

fore is the man who buildeth on him; who layeth him for his only foundation; who builds only upon his blood and righteousness, upon what he hath done and suffered for us. On this Cornerstone he fixes his faith, and rests the whole weight of his soul upon it. He is taught of God to say, Lord, I have sinned: I deserve the nethermost hell. But I am "justified freely by thy grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. And the life I now live, I live by faith in him, who loved me and gave himself for me." *The life I now live:* namely a divine heavenly life; a life, which is *hid with Christ in God.* I now live even in the flesh, a life of love, of pure love both to God and man: a life of holiness and happiness, praising God and doing all things to his glory.

4. Yet let not such an one think, That he shall not see war any more, that he is now out of the reach of temptation. It still remains, for God to prove the grace he hath given: he shall be tried as gold in the fire. He shall be tempted not less, than they who know not God: perhaps abundantly more. For Satan will not fail to try to the uttermost those whom he is not able to destroy: accordingly, *the rain* will impetuously *descend:* only at such times and in such a manner, as seems good, not to the Prince of the power of the air, but to Him *whose kingdom ruleth over all. The floods,* or torrents *will come;* they will lift up their waves and rage horribly. But to them also, the Lord that sitteth above the water-floods, that remaineth a King for ever, will say, "Hitherto shall ye come and no farther: here shall your proud waves be stayed." "The winds will blow and beat upon that house,"

houſe," as though they would tear it up from the foundation. But they cannot prevail: it falleth not; for it is founded upon a Rock. He buildeth on Chriſt by faith and love; therefore he ſhall not be caſt down. He "ſhall not fear though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midſt of the ſea. Though the waters thereof rage and ſwell, and the mountains ſhake at the tempeſt of the ſame: ſtill he dwelleth under the defence of the moſt High; and is ſafe under the ſhadow of the Almighty."

III. 1. How nearly then does it concern every child of man, practically to apply theſe things to himſelf? Diligently to examine, on what foundation he builds, whether on a rock or on the ſand? How deeply are *you* concerned to enquire, What is the foundation of *my* hope? Whereon do I build my expectation of entering into the kingdom of heaven? Is it not built on the ſand? Upon my *orthodoxy* or right opinions, (which by a groſs abuſe of words I have called *faith!*) Upon my having a ſet of notions (ſuppoſe more rational or ſcriptural than many others have.) Alas! What madneſs is this? Surely this is building on the ſand: or rather on the froth of the ſea! Say, I am convinced of this. Am I not again building my hope on what is equally unable to ſupport it? Perhaps on my belonging to "ſo excellent a Church: reformed after the true ſcripture-model: bleſt with the pureſt doctrine, the moſt primitive liturgy, the moſt Apoſtolical form of government!" Theſe are doubtleſs ſo many reaſons for praiſing God, as they may be ſo many helps to holineſs. But they are not holineſs itſelf. And if they are ſe-

parate

parate from it, they will profit me nothing. Nay, they will leave me the more without excuſe, and expoſed to the greater damnation. Therefore if I build my hope upon this foundation, I am ſtill building upon the ſand.

2. You cannot, you dare not reſt here. Upon what will you next build your hope of ſalvation? Upon your innocence? Upon your doing no harm? Your not wronging or hurting any one? Well: allow this plea to be true. You are juſt in all your dealings: you are a downright honeſt man. You pay every man his own: you neither cheat, nor extort: you act fairly with all mankind. And you have a conſcience towards God: you do not live in any known ſin. Thus far is well. But ſtill it is not the thing. You may go thus far, and yet never come to heaven. When all this harmleſſneſs flows from a right principle, it is the *leaſt part* of the Religion of Chriſt. But in you it does not flow from a right principle, and therefore is no part at all of Religion. So that in grounding your hope of ſalvation on this, you are ſtill building upon the ſand.

3. Do you go farther yet? Do you add to the doing no harm, the attending all the ordinances of God? Do you at all opportunities partake of the Lord's ſupper? Uſe public and private prayer? Faſt often? Hear and ſearch the Scriptures, and meditate thereon? Theſe things likewiſe ought you to have done, from the time you firſt ſet your face towards heaven. Yet theſe things alſo are nothing, being alone. They are nothing without the weightier matters of the law. And thoſe you have forgotten. At leaſt you experience them not; faith, mercy, and the love of God: holineſs of heart: heaven opened in the

the soul. Still therefore you build upon the sand.

4. Over and above all this, are you zealous of good works? Do you, as you have time, do good to all men? Do you feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction? Do you visit those that are sick? Relieve them that are in prison? Is any a stranger and do you take him in? Friend, come up higher. Do you *prophesy in the name of Christ?* Do you preach the truth as it is in Jesus? And does the influence of his Spirit attend your word, and make it the power of God unto salvation? Does he enable you to bring sinners from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God? Then go and learn what thou hast so often taught, "By grace ye are saved through faith. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saveth us." Learn to hang naked upon the cross of Christ, counting all thou hast done but dung and dross. Apply to him just in the spirit of the dying thief, of the harlot with her seven devils. Else thou art still on the sand, and after saving others, thou wilt lose thy own soul.

5. Lord! increase my faith, if I now believe! Else, give me faith, though but as a grain of mustard-seed!—But "what doth it profit, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can that faith save him?" O no! That faith which hath not works, which doth not produce both inward and outward holiness, which does not stamp the whole image of God on the heart, and purify us as he is pure: that faith which does not produce the whole of the Religion described in the foregoing

ing chapters, is not the faith of the gospel, not the Christian faith, not the faith which leads to glory. O beware of this, above all other snares of the devil, of resting on unholy, unsaving faith! If thou layest stress on this, thou art lost for ever: thou still buildest thy house upon the sand. When "the rain descends, and the floods come, it will surely fall, and great will be the fall of it."

6. Now therefore, build thou upon a rock. By the grace of God, know thyself. Know and feel, that thou wast shapen in wickedness, and in sin did thy mother conceive thee: and yet thou thyself hast been heaping sin upon sin, ever since thou couldst discern good from evil. Own thyself guilty of eternal death: and renounce all hope of ever being able to save thyself. Be it all thy hope, to be washed in his blood, and purified by his Spirit, "who himself bore all thy sins, in his own body upon the tree." And if thou knowest he hath taken away thy sins, so much the more abase thyself before him, in a continued sense of thy total dependance upon him for every good thought and word and work, and of thy utter inability to all good, unless he *water thee every moment.*

7. Now weep for thy sins, and mourn after God till he turns your heaviness into joy. And even then weep with them that weep: and for them that weep not for themselves. Mourn for the sins and miseries of mankind: and see, but just before your eyes, the immense ocean of eternity, without a bottom or a shore; which has already swallowed up millions of millions of men, and is gaping to devour them that yet remain. See here, the house of God eternal in the heavens; there, hell and destruction without

a covering. And hence learn the importance of every moment, which juſt appears and is gone for ever!

8. Now add to your ſeriouſneſs, meekneſs of wiſdom. Hold an even ſcale as to all your paſſions, but in particular, as to anger, ſorrow and fear. Calmly acquieſce in whatſoever is the will of God. Learn in every ſtate wherein you are, therewith to be content. Be mild to the good: be gentle toward all men; but eſpecially toward the evil and the unthankful. Beware not only of outward expreſſions of anger, ſuch as calling thy brother, *Raca*, or thou fool! But of every inward emotion contrary to love, though it go no farther than the heart. Be angry at ſin, as an affront offered to the Majeſty of heaven; but love the ſinner ſtill: like our Lord, who "looked round about upon the Phariſees with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts." He was grieved at the ſinners, angry at the ſin. Thus *be* thou *angry and ſin not.*

9. Now do thou hunger and thirſt, not for "the meat that periſheth, but for that which endureth unto everlaſting life." Trample under foot the world and the things of the world: all theſe riches, honours, pleaſures. What is the world to thee? Let the dead bury their dead: but follow thou after the image of God. And beware of quenching that bleſſed thirſt, if it is already excited in thy ſoul, by what is vulgarly called Religion, a poor, dull farce, a Religion of form, of outſide ſhow, which leaves the heart ſtill cleaving to the duſt, as earthly and ſenſual as ever. Let nothing ſatisfy thee but the power of godlineſs, but a Religion that is ſpirit and life; the dwelling in God, and God in thee;

thee; the being an inhabitant of eternity; the entering in by the blood of ſprinkling "within the veil, and ſitting in heavenly places with Chriſt Jeſus."

10. Now, ſeeing thou canſt do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening thee, be merciful as thy Father in heaven is merciful. Love thy neighbour as thyſelf. Love friends and enemies as thy own ſoul. And let thy love be *long-ſuffering*, and patient towards all men. Let it be *kind*, ſoft, benign: inſpiring thee with the moſt amiable ſweetneſs, and the moſt fervent and tender affection. Let it *rejoice in the truth*, whereſoever it is found, the truth that is after godlineſs. Enjoy whatſoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and good-will among men. In love *cover all things*; of the dead and the abſent ſpeaking nothing but good: *believe all things*, which may any way tend to clear your neighbour's character; *hope all things*, in his favour, and *endure all things*, triumphing over all oppoſition. For, true love never faileth, in time or in eternity.

11. Now, be thou *pure in heart*; purified through faith from every unholy affection, "cleanſing thyſelf from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, and perfecting holineſs in the fear of God." Being through the power of his grace purified from pride by deep poverty of ſpirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent paſſion, by meekneſs and mercifulneſs; from every deſire but to pleaſe and enjoy God, by hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs; now love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy ſtrength.

12. In a word. Let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Let it lie deep in thy inmoſt ſoul. Be thou little and baſe, and mean and vile, (beyond what words can expreſs) in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the duſt, by the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus. Be ſerious. Let the whole ſtream of thy thoughts, words, and actions flow from the deepeſt conviction, that thou ſtandeſt on the edge of the great gulf, thou and all the children of men, juſt ready to drop in, either into everlaſting glory or everlaſting burnings. Let thy ſoul be filled with mildneſs, gentleneſs, patience, long-ſuffering towards all men; at the ſame time that all which is in thee is athirſt for God, the living God; longing to awake up after his likeneſs, and to be ſatisfied with it. Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind. In this ſpirit do and ſuffer all things. Thus ſhew thy faith by thy works: thus "do the will of thy Father which is in heaven." And as ſure as thou now walkeſt with God on earth, thou ſhalt alſo reign with him in glory.

SERMON

SERMON XXXIII.

THE ORIGINAL, NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND USE OF THE LAW.

ROMANS VII. 12.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

1. PERHAPS there are few subjects within the whole compass of Religion, so little understood as this. The reader of this epistle is usually told, by *the law*, St. Paul means the *Jewish law:* and so apprehending himself to have no concern therewith, passes on without farther thought about it. Indeed some are not satisfied with this account: but observing the epistle is directed to the Romans, thence infer, that the Apostle in the beginning of this chapter, alludes to the old *Roman law*. But as they have no more concern with this, than with the

ceremonial law of *Moſes*, ſo they ſpend not much thought, on what they ſuppoſe is occaſionally mentioned, barely to illuſtrate another thing.

2. But a careful obſerver of the Apoſtle's diſcourſe, will not be content with theſe ſlight explications of it. And the more he weighs the words, the more convinced he will be, that St. Paul by *the law* mentioned in this chapter, does not mean either the ancient law of Rome, or the ceremonial law of Moſes. This will clearly appear to all who attentively conſider the tenor of his diſcourſe. He begins the chapter, "Know ye not, brethren (for I ſpeak to them that know the law," to them who have been inſtructed therein from their youth) "that the law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth?" ver. 1. (What, the law of *Rome* only, or the *ceremonial* law? No ſurely; but the Moral Law) "for," to give a plain inſtance, "the woman that hath an huſband, is bound by the (moral) law to her huſband as long as he liveth. But if her huſband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of her huſband, ver. 2. So then, if while her huſband liveth, ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs: but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is free from that law, ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man," ver. 3. From this particular inſtance the Apoſtle proceeds to draw that general concluſion, "Wherefore, my brethren," by a plain parity of reaſon, "ye alſo are become dead to the law," the whole Moſaic Inſtitution, "by the body of Chriſt," offered for you, and bringing you under a new diſpenſation: "that ye ſhould" [without any blame] "be married to another,

other, even to him who is raiſed from the dead," and hath thereby given proof of his authority to make the change, "that ye ſhould bring forth fruit unto God," ver. 4. And this we can do now, whereas before we could not: "for when we were in the fleſh," under the power of the fleſh, that is, of corrupt nature, (which was neceſſarily the caſe till we knew the power of Chriſt's reſurrection) "the motions of ſins, which were by the law," which were ſhewn and inflamed by the Moſaic law, not conquered, "did work in our members," broke out various ways, "to bring forth fruit unto death, ver. 5. But now we are delivered from the law," from that moral as well as ceremonial œconomy: "that being dead whereby we were held:" that entire inſtitution being now as it were dead, and having no more authority over us, than the huſband when dead hath over the wife: "that we ſhould ſerve him," who died for us and roſe again, "in newneſs of ſpirit," in a new ſpiritual diſpenſation, "and not in the oldneſs of the letter," ver. 6. With a bare outward ſervice according to the letter of the Moſaic Inſtitution.

3. The Apoſtle having gone thus far, in proving that the Chriſtian had ſet aſide the Jewiſh diſpenſation, and the moral law itſelf, though it could never paſs away, yet it ſtood on a different foundation from what it did before, now ſtops to propoſe and anſwer an objection, "What ſhall we ſay then? Is the law ſin?" So ſome might infer from a miſapprehenſion of thoſe words, "the motions of ſin which were by the law." "God forbid!" ſaith the Apoſtle, that we ſhould ſay ſo. Nay, the law is an irre-

concileable

concileable enemy to sin; searching it out wherever it is. "I had not known sin but by the law. I had not known lust," evil desire to be sin, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet," ver. 7. After opening this farther in the four following verses, he subjoins this general conclusion, with regard more especially to the moral law, from which the preceding instance was taken: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

4. In order to explain and enforce these deep words, so little regarded, because so little understood, I shall endeavour to shew, First, the original of this law: Secondly, The nature thereof; Thirdly, The properties, that it is *holy, and just, and good:* And Fourthly, The uses of it.

I. 1. I shall, first, endeavour to shew the original of the moral law, often called *the law*, by way of eminence. Now this is not, as some may have possibly imagined, of so late an institution as the time of Moses. Noah declared it to men long before that time, and Enoch before him. But we may trace its original higher still, even beyond the foundation of the world, to that period, unknown indeed to men, but doubtless enrolled in the annals of eternity, when *the morning stars* first *sang together*, being newly called into existence. It pleased the great Creator to make these his first born sons, intelligent beings, that they might know him that created them. For this end he endued them with understanding, to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil: and as a necessary result of this, with liberty, a capacity of chusing the one and refusing the other. By this they were likewise enabled to

to offer him a free and willing ſervice: a ſervice rewardable in itſelf, as well as moſt acceptable to their gracious Maſter.

2. To employ all the faculties which he had given them, particularly their underſtanding and liberty, he gave them a law, a compleat model of all truth, ſo far as was intelligible to a finite being, and of all good, ſo far as angelic minds were capable of embracing it. It was alſo the deſign of their beneficent Governor herein, to make way for a continual increaſe of their happineſs: ſeeing every inſtance of obedience to that law, would both add to the perfection of their nature, and entitle them to an higher reward, which the righteous Judge would give in its ſeaſon.

3. In like manner, when God in his appointed time, had created a new order of intelligent beings, when he had raiſed man from the duſt of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and cauſed him to become a living ſoul, endued with power to chuſe good or evil: he gave to this free intelligent creature, the ſame law as to his firſt-born children: not wrote indeed upon tables of ſtone, or any corruptible ſubſtance, but engraven on his heart by the finger of God, wrote in the inmoſt ſpirit both of men and of angels: to the intent it might never be afar off, never hard to be underſtood; but always at hand, and always ſhining with clear light, even as the ſun in the midſt of heaven.

4. Such was the original of the law of God. With regard to man, it was co-eval with his nature. But with regard to the elder ſons of God, it ſhone in its full ſplendor, "or ever the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the round

round world were made." But it was not long before man rebelled againſt God, and by breaking this glorious law, well nigh effaced it out of his heart; *the eyes of his underſtanding* being *darkened*, in the ſame meaſure as his ſoul was "alienated from the life of God." And yet God did not deſpiſe the work of his own hands: but being reconciled to man through the Son of his love, he in ſome meaſure re-inſcribed his law, on the heart of his dark, ſinful creature. *He* again *ſhewed thee, O man, what is good* (although not as in the beginning) *even to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*

5. And this he ſhewed not only to our firſt parents, but likewiſe to all their poſterity, by "that true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world." But notwithſtanding this light, all fleſh had in proceſs of time *corrupted their way before him:* till he choſe out of mankind a peculiar people, to whom he gave a more perfect knowledge of his law. And the heads of this, becauſe they were ſlow of underſtanding, he wrote on two tables of ſtone; which he commanded the fathers to teach their children, through all ſucceeding generations.

6. And thus it is, that the law of God is now made known to them that know not God. They hear, with the hearing of the ear, the things that were written aforetime for our inſtruction. But this does not ſuffice. They cannot by this means comprehend the height and depth and length and breadth thereof. God alone can reveal this by his Spirit. And ſo he does to all that truly believe, in conſequence of that gracious promiſe, made to all the Iſrael of God: "Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord, that

that I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael. And this ſhall be the covenant that I will make, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people," Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.

II. 1. The nature of that law which was originally given to angels in heaven and man in paradiſe, and which God has ſo mercifully promiſed to write afreſh, in the hearts of all true believers, was the ſecond thing I propoſed to ſhew. In order to which I would firſt obſerve, That although *the law* and *the commandment* are ſometimes differently taken, (the commandment meaning but a part of the law) yet in the text they are uſed, as equivalent terms, implying one and the ſame thing. But we cannot underſtand here, either by one or the other, the ceremonial law, whereof the Apoſtle ſays, in the words above recited, "I had not known ſin but by the law:" this is too plain to need a proof. Neither is it the ceremonial law which ſaith, in the words immediately ſubjoined, "Thou ſhalt not covet." Therefore the ceremonial law has no place in the preſent queſtion.

2. Neither can we underſtand by the law mentioned in the text, the Moſaic diſpenſation. It is true the word is ſometimes ſo underſtood: as when the Apoſtle ſays, ſpeaking to the Galatians, (chap. iii. ver. 17.) "The covenant which was confirmed before (namely with Abraham the father of the faithful) the law, i. e. the Moſaic diſpenſation, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul." But it cannot be ſo underſtood in the text; for the Apoſtle never beſtows,

beſtows, ſo high commendations as theſe upon that imperfect and ſhadowy diſpenſation. He no where affirms, the Moſaic to be a ſpiritual law; or that it is *holy, and juſt and good.* Neither is it true, that God will *write* that law *in the* hearts of them whoſe *iniquities he remembers no more.* It remains that *the law*, eminently ſo termed, is no other than the moral law.

3. Now this law is an incorruptible picture of the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity. It is he whom in his eſſence no man hath ſeen or can ſee, made viſible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled: God manifeſted to his creatures as they are able to bear it: manifeſted to give, and not to deſtroy life; that they may ſee God and live. It is the heart of God diſcloſed to man. Yea, in ſome ſenſe we may apply to this law, what the Apoſtle ſays of his Son, it is ἀπάυγασμα τῆς δόξης, καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτου· *The ſtreaming forth* or out-beaming *of his glory, the expreſs image of his perſon.*

4. "If virtue, ſaid the ancient heathen, could aſſume ſuch a ſhape as that we could behold her with our eyes, what wonderful love would ſhe excite in us!" If virtue could do this! It is done already. The law of God is all virtues in one, in ſuch a ſhape, as to be beheld with open face, by all thoſe whoſe eyes God hath enlightened. What is the law, but divine virtue and wiſdom, aſſuming a viſible form? What is it, but the original ideas of truth and good, which were lodged in the uncreated Mind from eternity, now drawn forth and clothed with ſuch a vehicle, as to appear even to human underſtanding?

5. If we ſurvey the law of God in another point of view, it is ſupreme, unchangeable rea-

ſon: it is unalterable rectitude: it is the everlaſting fitneſs of all things that are or ever were created. I am ſenſible, what a ſhortneſs, and even impropriety there is, in theſe and all other human expreſſions, when we endeavour by theſe faint pictures, to ſhadow out the deep things of God. Nevertheleſs we have no better, indeed no other way, during this our infant ſtate of exiſtence. *As we* now *know* but *in part*, ſo *we* are conſtrained to *propheſy*, i. e. ſpeak of the things of God, *in part* alſo. "We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs," while we are in this houſe of clay. While I am *a child*, *I* muſt *ſpeak as a child*. But I ſhall ſoon *put away childiſh things*. For "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away."

6. But to return. The law of God, (ſpeaking after the manner of men) is a copy of the eternal Mind, a tranſcript of the Divine Nature: yea it is the faireſt offſpring of the everlaſting Father, the brighteſt efflux of his eſſential wiſdom, the viſible beauty of the Moſt High. It is the delight and wonder of cherubim and ſeraphim, and all the company of heaven, and the glory and joy of every wiſe believer, every well inſtructed child of God upon earth.

III. 1. Such is the nature of the ever-bleſſed law of God. I am, in the third place, to ſhew the properties of it: not all; for that would exceed the wiſdom of an angel. But thoſe only which are mentioned in the text. Theſe are three: *It is holy, juſt, and good.* And firſt, *The law is holy.*

2. In this expreſſion the Apoſtle does not appear to ſpeak of its effects, but rather of its nature: as St. James ſpeaking of the ſame thing under another name, ſays, *The wiſdom from above* (which is no other than this law, written in our heart) *is firſt pure*, chap. iii. 17. ἁγνὴ, chaſte, ſpotleſs, eternally, and eſſentially holy. And conſequently when it is tranſcribed into the life, as well as the ſoul, (it is as the ſame Apoſtle terms it) chap. 27. θρησκεία καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος. *pure religion and undefiled*; or, the pure, clean, unpolluted worſhip of God.

3. It is indeed, in the higheſt degree, pure, chaſte, clean, holy. Otherwiſe it could not be the immediate offſpring, and much leſs the expreſs reſemblance of God, who is eſſential holineſs. It is pure from all ſin, clean and unſpotted from any touch of evil. It is a chaſte virgin, incapable of any defilement, of any mixture with that which is unclean or unholy. It has no fellowſhip with ſin of any kind. For *what communion hath light with darkneſs?* As ſin is in its very nature enmity to God, ſo his law is enmity to ſin.

4. Therefore it is, that the Apoſtle rejects with ſuch abhorrence, that blaſphemous ſuppoſition, that *the law* of God *is* either *ſin* itſelf, or the cauſe of ſin. God *forbid*, that we ſhould ſuppoſe, it is the cauſe of ſin, becauſe it is the diſcoverer of it: becauſe it detects the hidden things of darkneſs, and drags them out into open day. It is true, by this means, (as the Apoſtle obſerves,) ver. 13. *Sin appears to be ſin.* All its diſguiſes are torn away, and it appears in its native deformity. It is true likewiſe, that "ſin by the commandment becomes exceeding ſinful."

Being

Being now committed againſt light and knowledge, being ſtript even of the poor plea of ignorance, it loſes its excuſe as well as diſguiſe, and becomes far more odious both to God and man. Yea, and it is true, that "ſin worketh death by that which is good," which itſelf is pure and holy. When it is dragged out to light, it rages the more: when it is reſtrained, it burſts out with greater violence. Thus the Apoſtle, (ſpeaking in the perſon of one, who was convinced of ſin, but not yet delivered from it) "ſin taking occaſion by the commandment," detecting and endeavouring to reſtrain it, diſdained the reſtraint, and ſo much the more "wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence," ver. 8. All manner of fooliſh and hurtful deſires, which that commandment ſought to reſtrain. Thus "when the commandment came, ſin revived," ver. 9. It fretted and raged the more. But this is no ſtain on the commandment. Though it is abuſed, it cannot be defiled. This only proves, that "the heart of man is deſperately wicked." But *the law* of God is *holy* ſtill.

5. And it is, ſecondly *juſt*. It renders to all their due. It preſcribes exactly what is right, preciſely what ought to be done, ſaid or thought, both with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourſelves, and with regard to every creature which he has made. It is adapted in all reſpects to the nature of things, of the whole univerſe and every individual. It is ſuited to all the circumſtances of each, and to all their mutual relations, whether ſuch as have exiſted from the beginning, or ſuch as commenced in any following period. It is exactly agreeable to the fitneſſes of things, whether eſſential or

accidental. It clashes with none of these in any degree; nor is ever unconnected with them. If the word be taken in that sense, there is nothing *arbitrary* in the law of God. Although still the whole and every part thereof, is totally dependent upon his will: so that *thy will be done*, is the supreme universal law both in earth and heaven.

6. "But is the will of God the cause of his law? Is his will the original of right and wrong? Is a thing therefore right, because God wills it? Or does he will it, because it is right?"

I fear, this celebrated question is more curious than useful. And perhaps, in the manner it is usually treated of, it does not so well consist with the regard that is due from a creature, to the Creator and Governor of all things. It is hardly decent for man, to call the supreme God to give an account to him! Nevertheless, with awe and reverence we may speak a little. The Lord pardon us, if we speak amiss!

7. It seems then, that the whole difficulty arises from considering God's will as distinct from God. Otherwise it vanishes away. For none can doubt, but God is the cause of the law of God. But the will of God is God himself. It is God considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently, to say, That the will of God, or that God himself is the cause of the law, is one and the same thing.

8. Again; if the law, the immutable rule of right and wrong, depends on the nature and fitnesses of things, and on their essential relations to each other: (I do not say, their eternal relations; because the eternal relations of things existing in time, is little less than a contradiction:) if, I say, this depends on the nature and relations

tions of things, then it must depend on God, or the will of God: because those things themselves with all their relations, are the work of his hands. By his will, *for his pleasure* alone, *they* all *are and were created.*

9. And yet it may be granted (which is probably all that a considerate person would contend for) that in every particular case, God wills this or this (suppose that men should honour their parents) because it is right, agreeable to the fitness of things, to the relation wherein they stand.

10. The law then is right and just concerning all things. And it is *good* as well as *just.* This we may easily infer from the fountain whence it flowed. For what was this, but the goodness of God? What but goodness alone inclined him to impart that divine copy of himself to the holy angels? To what else can we impute his bestowing upon man the same transcript of his own nature? And what but tender love constrained him afresh to manifest his will to fallen man? Either to Adam, or any of his seed, who like him were *come short of the glory of God?* Was it not mere love that moved him to publish his law, after the understandings of men were darkened? And to send his prophets to declare that law, to the blind, thoughtless children of men? Doubtless his goodness it was, which raised up Enoch and Noah, to be Preachers of righteousness; which caused Abraham, his friend, and Isaac and Jacob, to bear witness to his truth. It was his goodness alone, which when *darkness* had *covered the earth, and thick darkness the people*, gave a written law to Moses, and through him to the nation whom he

had chosen. It was his love which explained these living oracles by David and all the Prophets that followed: until, when the fulness of time was come, he sent his only begotten Son, "not to destroy the law, but to fulfil;" to confirm every jot and tittle thereof, till having wrote it in the hearts of all his children, and put all his enemies under his feet, *he shall deliver up* his mediatorial *kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.*

11. And this law which the goodness of God gave at first, and has preserved through all ages, is, like the fountain from whence it springs, full of goodness and benignity: it is mild and kind; it is (as the Psalmist expresses it) "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." It is winning and amiable. It includes "whatsoever things are lovely or of good report. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise" before God and his holy angels, they are all comprized in this: wherein are hid all the treasures of the divine wisdom and knowledge and love.

12. And it is good in its effects, as well as in its nature. As the tree is, so are its fruits. The fruits of the law of God written in the heart, are "righteousness and peace and assurance for ever." Or rather, the law itself is righteousness, filling the soul with a peace that passeth all understanding, and causing us to rejoice evermore, in the testimony of a good conscience toward God. It is not so properly a pledge, as "an earnest of our inheritance," being a part of the purchased possession. It is God made manifest in our flesh, and bringing with him eternal life: assuring us by that pure and perfect love, that we are "sealed unto the day

day of redemption:" that he will "ſpare us as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him, in the day when he maketh up his jewels," and that there remaineth for us, "a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

IV. 1. It remains only to ſhew, in the fourth and laſt place, The uſes of the law. And the firſt uſe of it without queſtion is, to convince the world of ſin. This is indeed the peculiar work of the Holy Ghoſt; who can work it without any means at all, or by whatever means it pleaſeth him, however inſufficient in themſelves, or even improper to produce ſuch an effect. And accordingly ſome there are whoſe hearts have been broken in pieces in a moment, either in ſickneſs or in health, without any viſible cauſe, or any outward means whatever. And others (one in an age) have been awakened to a ſenſe of the *wrath of God abiding on* them, by hearing, That "God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf." But it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God, to convict ſinners by the law. It is this, which being ſet home on the conſcience, generally breaketh the rocks in pieces. It is more eſpecially this part of *the word of God*, which *is* ζῶν καὶ ἐνεργὴς, *quick and powerful*, full of life and energy, *and ſharper than any two-edged ſword*. This in the hand of God and of thoſe whom he hath ſent, pierces through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and "divides aſunder even the ſoul and the ſpirit," yea, as it were, the very "joints and marrow." By this is the ſinner diſcovered to himſelf. All his fig-leaves are torn away, and he ſees that he is "wretched, and poor, and miſerable, and blind and

and naked." The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His *mouth is stopt*, and he stands *guilty before God.*

2. To slay the sinner is then the first use of the law; to destroy the life and strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth; not only under sentence of death, but actually dead unto God, void of all spiritual life, "dead in trespasses and sins." The second use of it is, to bring him unto life, unto Christ, that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices, it acts the part of a severe schoolmaster. It drives us by force, rather than draws us by love. And yet love is the spring of all. It is the spirit of love, which by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh, which leaves us no broken reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the sinner, stript of all, to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, or groan in the depth of his heart,

"I give up every plea beside
Lord, I am damn'd—but thou hast died."

3. The third use of the law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God.

I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood, not only by the world, but even by many whom God hath taken out of the world, who are real children of God by faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestionable truth, that when we come to Christ, we have done with the law; and that in this sense, "Christ is the end of the law, to every one that

that believeth." *The end of the law.* So he is, *for righteouſneſs*, for juſtification *to every one that believeth.* Herein the law is at an end. It juſtifies none; but only brings them to Chriſt. Who is alſo in another reſpect, *the end* or ſcope *of the law*, the point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to him, it has yet a farther office, namely, To keep us with him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they ſee of its height and depth and length and breadth, to exhort one another ſo much the more.

"Cloſer and cloſer let us cleave
To his belov'd embrace:
Expect his fulneſs to receive,
And grace to anſwer grace."

4. Allowing then that every believer has done with the law, as it means the Jewiſh ceremonial law, or the entire Moſaic diſpenſation (for theſe *Chriſt hath taken out of the way.*) Yea, allowing we have done with the moral law, as a means of procuring our juſtification (for we are "juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus.") Yet in another ſenſe, we have not done with this law. For it is ſtill of unſpeakable uſe, firſt, in convincing us of the ſin that yet remains both in our hearts and lives, and thereby keeping us cloſe to Chriſt, that his blood may cleanſe us every moment; ſecondly, in deriving ſtrength from our head into his living members, whereby he impowers them to do what his law commands; and thirdly, in confirming our hope of whatſoever it commands and we have not yet attained, of receiving grace upon grace, till we are in actual poſſeſſion of the fulneſs of his promiſes.

5. How

5. How clearly does this agree with the experience of every true believer! while he cries out, "O what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my ſtudy in it;" he ſees daily in that divine mirror, more and more of his own ſinfulneſs. He ſees more and more clearly, that he is ſtill a ſinner in all things; that neither his heart nor his ways are right before God. And that every moment ſends him to Chriſt. This ſhews him the meaning of what is written, "Thou ſhalt make a plate of pure gold and grave upon it, Holineſs to the Lord. And it ſhall be upon Aaron's forehead," (the type of our great High-Prieſt) "that Aaron may bear the iniquities of the holy things, which the children of Iſrael ſhall hallow in all their holy gifts:" (ſo far are our prayers or holy things from atoning for the reſt of our ſins!) "And it ſhall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord," Ex. xxviii. 36, 38.

6. To explain this by a ſingle inſtance. The law ſays, "Thou ſhalt not kill," and hereby (as our Lord teaches) forbids not only outward acts, but every unkind word or thought. Now the more I look into this perfect law, the more I feel how far I come ſhort of it: and the more I feel this, the more I feel the need of his blood to atone for all my ſin: and of his Spirit to purify my heart, and make me "perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

7. Therefore I cannot ſpare the law one moment, no more than I can ſpare Chriſt: ſeeing I now want it as much, to keep me to Chriſt, as ever I wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwiſe, this *evil heart of unbelief* would immediately *depart*

part from the living God. Indeed each is continually ſending me to the other, the law to Chriſt, and Chriſt to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law conſtrain me to fly to the love of God in Chriſt. On the other, the love of God in Chriſt endears the law to me *above gold or precious ſtones:* ſeeing I know every part of it, is a gracious promiſe, which my Lord will fulfil in its ſeaſon.

8. Who art thou then, O man, that *judgeſt the law, and ſpeakeſt evil of the law?* That rankeſt it with ſin, ſatan, and death, and ſendeſt them all to hell together! The Apoſtle James eſteemed *judging* or *ſpeaking evil of the law,* ſo enormous a piece of wickedneſs, that he knew not how to aggravate the guilt of judging our Brethren, more than by ſhewing it included this. *So now,* ſays he, *thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge!* A judge of that which God hath ordained to judge thee. So thou haſt ſet up thyſelf in the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and caſt down the rule, whereby he will judge the world! O take knowledge what advantage Satan hath gained over thee! And for the time to come never think or ſpeak lightly of, much leſs dreſs up as a ſcarecrow this bleſſed inſtrument of the grace of God. Yea, love and value it for the ſake of him from whom it came, and of him to whom it leads. Let it be thy glory and joy, next to the croſs of Chriſt. Declare its praiſe, and make it honourable before all men.

9. And if thou art thoroughly convinced, That it is the offſpring of God, that it is the copy of all his amiable perfections, and that it *is holy and juſt and good,* but eſpecially to them that believe:

believe: then instead of casting it away as a polluted thing, see that thou cleave to it more and more. Never let the law of mercy and truth, of love to God and man, of lowliness, meekness and purity forsake thee. "Bind it about thy neck: write it on the table of thy heart." Keep close to the law, if thou wilt keep close to Christ: hold it fast: let it not go. Let this continually lead thee to the atoning blood, continually confirm thy hope, till all the *righteousness of the law is fulfilled in* thee, and thou art *filled with all the fulness of God.*

10. And if thy Lord hath already fulfilled his word, if he hath already *written his law in thy heart*, then "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free." Thou art not only made free from Jewish ceremonies, from the guilt of sin and the fear of hell: (these are so far from being the whole, that they are the least and lowest part, of Christian liberty:) but what is infinitely more, from the power of sin, from serving the devil, from offending God. O stand fast in this liberty, in comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named. Stand fast in loving God with all thy heart, and serving him with all thy strength. This is perfect freedom; thus to keep the law, and to walk in all his commandments blameless. "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." I do not mean of Jewish bondage: nor yet of bondage to the fear of hell: these, I trust, are far from thee. But beware of being entangled again with the yoke of sin, of any inward or outward transgression of the law. Abhor sin far more than death or hell; abhor sin itself, far more than the

punishment of it. Beware of the bondage of pride, of desire, of anger; of every evil temper, or word or work. *Look unto Jesus*, and in order thereto, *look* more and more *into the perfect law, the law of liberty.* And *continue therein:* so shalt thou daily *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

SERMON XXXIV.

THE LAW ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH.

ROMANS III. 31.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law.

1. ST. PAUL having in the beginning of this epistle, laid down his general proposition, namely, That "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth:" the powerful means, whereby God makes every believer a partaker of present and eternal salvation, goes on to shew, that there is no other way under heaven, whereby men can be saved. He speaks particularly of salvation from the guilt of sin, which he commonly terms justification. And that all men stood in need of this, that none could plead their own innocence, he proves at large by various arguments, addressed to the Jews as well as the Heathens. Hence he infers (in the

the 19th verſe of this chapter) *That every mouth*, whether of Jew or Heathen, muſt *be ſtopt* from excuſing or juſtifying himſelf, " and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore," ſaith he, by his own obedience, " by the works of the law, ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight," ver. 20. " But now the righteouſneſs of God without the law," without our previous obedience thereto, " is manifeſted," ver. 21. " Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all, and upon all them that believe," ver. 22. " For there is no difference," as to their need of juſtification, or the manner wherein they attain it. " For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God," (ver. 23.) the glorious image of God wherein they were created: and all (who attain) " are juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt:" ver. 24. " Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood—ver. 25. That he might be juſt, and yet the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus;" ver. 30. that without any impeachment to his juſtice, he might ſhew him mercy, for the ſake of that propitiation. " Therefore we conclude," (which was the grand poſition he had undertaken to eſtabliſh) that a man is juſtified by faith, without the works of the law," ver. 28.

2. It was eaſy to foreſee an objection which might be made, and which has in fact been made in all ages: namely, That to ſay, " we are juſtified without the works of the law," is to aboliſh the law. The Apoſtle without entering into a formal diſpute, ſimply denies the charge. " Do we then, ſays he, make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we eſtabliſh the law."

3. The ſtrange imagination of ſome, that St. Paul, when he ſays, "A man is juſtified without the works of the law," means only the ceremonial law, is abundantly confuted by theſe very words. For did St. Paul eſtabliſh the ceremonial law? It is evident, he did not. He did make void that law through faith, and openly avowed his doing ſo. It was the moral law only of which he might truly ſay, We do not make void but eſtabliſh this through faith.

4. But all men are not herein of his mind. Many there are who will not agree to this. Many in all ages of the Church, even among thoſe who bore the name of Chriſtians, have contended, That *the faith once delivered to the ſaints*, was deſigned to make void the whole law. They would no more ſpare the moral than the ceremonial law, but were for *hewing*, as it were, *both in pieces before the Lord:* vehemently maintaining, "If you eſtabliſh any law, *Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing: Chriſt is become of none effect to you: ye are fallen from grace.*"

5. But is the zeal of theſe men according to knowledge? Have they obſerved the connection between the law and faith? And that conſidering that cloſe connection between them, to deſtroy one is indeed to deſtroy both? That to aboliſh the moral law is, in truth, to aboliſh faith and the law together? As leaving no proper means, either of bringing us to faith, or of *ſtirring up that gift of God* in our ſoul.

6. It therefore behoves all who deſire either to come to Chriſt, or to *walk in him whom they have received*, to take heed how they *make void the law through faith;* to ſecure us effectually againſt which, let us enquire, firſt, Which are the moſt

uſual

uſual ways of *making void the law through faith*, and ſecondly, How we may follow the Apoſtle, and by faith *eſtabliſh the law*.

I. 1. Let us, firſt, enquire, What are the moſt uſual ways of "making void the law through faith." Now the way for a Preacher to make it all void at a ſtroke, is, not to preach it at all. This is juſt the ſame thing, as to blot it out of the Oracles of God. More eſpecially when it is done with deſign; when it is made a rule, "Not to preach the law:" and the very phraſe, "A Preacher of the law," is uſed as a term of reproach, as though it meant little leſs than, "an enemy to the goſpel."

2. All this proceeds from the deepeſt ignorance of the nature, properties, and uſe of the law: and proves that thoſe who act thus, either know not Chriſt, are utter ſtrangers to the living faith: or at leaſt, that they are but babes in Chriſt, and as ſuch *unſkilled in the word of righteouſneſs*.

3. Their grand plea is this: "That preaching the goſpel (that is, according to their judgment, the ſpeaking of nothing but the ſufferings and merits of Chriſt) anſwers all the ends of the law." But this we utterly deny. It does not anſwer the very firſt end of the law, namely, The convincing men of ſin, the awakening thoſe who are ſtill aſleep on the brink of hell. There may have been here and there an exempt caſe. One in a thouſand may have been awakened by the goſpel. But this is no general rule. The ordinary method of God, is to convict ſinners by the law, and that only. The goſpel is not the means which God hath ordained, or which

our Lord himself used, for this end. We have no authority in Scripture for applying it thus, nor any ground to think it will prove effectual. Nor have we any more ground to expect this, from the nature of the thing. *They that be whole*, as our Lord himself observes, *need not a Physician, but they that be sick.* It is absurd therefore to offer a Physician to them that are whole, or at least imagine themselves so to be. You are first to convince them, that they are sick. Otherwise they will not thank you for your labour. It is equally absurd to offer Christ to them, whose heart is whole, having never yet been broken. It is in the proper sense *casting pearls before swine.* Doubtless *they will trample them under foot.* And it is no more than you have reason to expect, if they also *turn again and rend you.*

4. "But although there is no command in Scripture to offer Christ to the careless sinner, yet are there not scriptural precedents for it?" I think not any. I believe you cannot produce one, either from the four Evangelists, or the Acts of the Apostles. Neither can you prove this to have been the practice of any of the Apostles, from any passage in all their writings.

5. "Nay, does not the Apostle Paul say, in his former Epistle to the Corinthians, "We preach Christ crucified?" chap. i. ver. 23. And in his latter, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord?" chap. v. ver. 4.

We consent to rest the cause on this issue: to tread in his steps, to follow his example. Only preach you, just as St. Paul preached, and the dispute is at an end.

For although we are certain he *preached Christ*, in

in as perfect a manner as the very chief of the Apoſtles, yet who *preached the law* more than St. Paul? Therefore he did not think the goſpel anſwered the ſame end.

6. The very firſt ſermon of St. Paul's, which is recorded, concludes in theſe words. "By him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes. Beware therefore leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the Prophets, Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder and periſh. For I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you," Acts xiii. 39, &c. Now it is manifeſt, all this is *preaching the law*, in the ſenſe wherein you underſtand the term: even although great part of, if not all his hearers, were either *Jews or religious proſelytes*, ver. 43, and therefore probably many of them, in ſome degree at leaſt, convinced of ſin already. He firſt reminds them, That they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes, but only by faith in Chriſt: and then ſeverely threatens them with the judgments of God, which is in the ſtrongeſt ſenſe *preaching the law*.

7. In his next diſcourſe, that to the heathens at Lyſtra, (chap. xiv. ver. 15, &c.) we do not find ſo much as the name of Chriſt. The whole purport of it is, That they ſhould "turn from thoſe vain idols, unto the living God." Now confeſs the truth. Do not you think, If you had been there, you could have preached much better than he? I ſhould not wonder, if you thought too, That his *preaching ſo ill*, occaſioned his being *ſo ill treated*: and that his being *ſtoned*, was a juſt judgment upon him, for not *preaching Chriſt!*

8. To

8. To the jaylor indeed, when "he ſprang in and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved," he immediately ſaid, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt." chap. xvi. 29, &c.) And in the caſe of one ſo deeply convinced of ſin, who would not have ſaid the ſame? But to the men of Athens you find him ſpeaking in a quite different manner, reproving their ſuperſtition, ignorance and idolatry; and ſtrongly moving them to repent, from the conſideration of a future judgment, and of the reſurrection from the dead, (chapter xvii. verſes 24—31.) Likewiſe *when Felix ſent for Paul*, on purpoſe that he might *hear him concerning the faith in Chriſt;* inſtead of preaching Chriſt in *your* ſenſe (which would probably have cauſed the Governor either to mock, or to contradict and blaſpheme) *he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come*, till Felix (hardened as he was) *trembled*, (chap. xxiv. ver. 24, 25.) Go thou and tread in his ſteps. *Preach* Chriſt to the careleſs ſinner, by *reaſoning of righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come!*

9. If you ſay, "But he *preached Chriſt* in a different manner in his Epiſtles." I anſwer, he did not there preach at all: not in that ſenſe wherein we ſpeak: for preaching in our preſent queſtion, means ſpeaking before a congregation.

But waving this. I anſwer, 2. His Epiſtles are directed, not to unbelievers, ſuch as thoſe we are now ſpeaking of, but *to the ſaints of God in* Rome, Corinth, Philippi, and other places. Now unqueſtionably he would ſpeak more of Chriſt to theſe, than to thoſe who were without God

God in the world. And yet, 3. Every one of these is full of the law, even the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians: in both of which he does what you term preaching the law, and that to believers as well as unbelievers.

10. From hence it is plain, you know not what it is, to *preach Christ*, in the sense of the Apostle. For doubtless St. Paul judged himself to be *preaching Christ*, both to Felix, and at Antioch, Lystra, and Athens. From whose example every thinking man must infer, that not only the declaring the love of Christ to sinners, but also the declaring that he will come from heaven in flaming fire, is, in the Apostle's sense, *preaching Christ*: yea, in the full scriptural meaning of the word. To *preach Christ*, is, to preach what he hath revealed either in the Old or New Testament: so that you are then as really preaching Christ, when you are saying, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God," as when you are saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

11. Consider this well; that to *preach Christ*, is to preach all things that Christ hath spoken; all his promises, all his threatenings and commands; all that is written in his book. And then you will know how to preach Christ, without making void the law.

12. "But does not the greatest blessing attend those discourses, wherein we peculiarly preach the merits and sufferings of Christ?"

Probably, when we preach to a congregation of mourners or believers, these will be attended with the greatest blessing: because such discourses

courſes are peculiarly ſuited to their ſtate. At leaſt, theſe will uſually convey the moſt comfort. But this is not always the greateſt bleſſing. I may ſometimes receive a far greater, by a diſcourſe that cuts me to the heart and humbles me to the duſt. Neither ſhould I receive that comfort, if I were to preach or to hear no diſcourſes but on the ſufferings of Chriſt. Theſe by the conſtant repetition would loſe their force, and grow more and more flat and dead: till at length they would become a dull round of words, without any ſpirit or life or virtue. So that thus to *preach Chriſt*, muſt in proceſs of time, make void the goſpel as well as the law.

II. 1. A ſecond way of *making void the law through faith*, is, the teaching that faith ſuperſedes the neceſſity of holineſs. This divides itſelf into a thouſand ſmaller paths: and many there are that walk therein. Indeed there are few that wholly eſcape it: few who are convinced, we *are ſaved by faith*, but are ſooner or later, more or leſs, drawn aſide into this by-way.

2. All thoſe are drawn into this by-way, who if it be not their ſettled judgment, that faith in Chriſt entirely ſets aſide the neceſſity of keeping his law, yet ſuppoſe either, 1. That holineſs is leſs neceſſary now than it was before Chriſt: or, 2. That a leſs degree of it is neceſſary; or, 3. That it is leſs neceſſary to believers than to others. Yea, and ſo are thoſe, who although their judgment be right in the general, yet think they may take more liberty in particular caſes, than they could have done before they believed.

Indeed

Indeed the using the term *liberty*, in such a manner, for "liberty from obedience or holiness," shews at once, that their judgment is perverted, and that they are guilty of what they imagined to be far from them, namely of *making void the law through faith*, by supposing faith to supersede holiness.

3. The first plea of those who teach this expressly, is, that "we are now under the covenant of grace, not works: and therefore we are no longer under the necessity of performing the works of the law."

And who ever was under the covenant of works? None but Adam before the fall. He was fully and properly under that covenant, which required perfect, universal obedience, as the one condition of acceptance; and left no place for pardon, upon the very least transgression. But no man else was ever under this, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither before Christ nor since. All his sons were and are under the covenant of grace; the manner of their acceptance is this: the free grace of God through the merits of Christ, gives pardon to them that believe, that believe with such a faith as working by love, produces all obedience and holiness.

4. The case is not therefore as you suppose, that men were *once* more obliged to obey God, or to work the works of his law than they are *now*. This is a supposition you cannot make good. But, we should have been obliged, if we had been under the covenant of works, to have done those works antecedent to our acceptance. Whereas now all good works, though as necessary as ever, are not antecedent to our acceptance but consequent upon it. Therefore the

the nature of the covenant of grace, gives you no ground, no encouragement at all, to set aside any instance or degree of obedience, any part or measure of holiness.

5. "But are we not *justified by faith without the works of the law?*" Undoubtedly we are, without the works either of the ceremonial or the moral law. And would to God all men were convinced of this. It would prevent innumerable evils. Antinomianism, in particular; for generally speaking, they are the Pharisees who make the Antinomians. Running into an extreme so palpably contrary to Scripture, they occasion others to run into the opposite one. These seeking to be justified by works, affright those from allowing any place for them.

6. But the truth lies between both. We are doubtless *justified by faith.* This is the corner-stone of the whole Christian building. We are *justified without the works of the law,* as any previous condition of justification. But they are an immediate fruit of that faith, whereby we are justified. So that if good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth: we are yet in our sins. Therefore, that *we are justified by faith,* even by *faith without works,* is no ground for *making void the law through faith:* or for imagining that faith is a dispensation, from any kind or degree of holiness.

7. Nay, but does not St. Paul expressly say, "Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness?" And does it not follow from hence, That faith is to a believer in the room, in the place of righteousness? But if faith

faith is in the room of righteouſneſs or holineſs, what need is there of this too?"

This it muſt be acknowledged, comes home to the point, and is indeed the main pillar of Antinomianiſm. And yet it needs not a long or laboured anſwer. We allow, that God *juſtifies the ungodly*, him that till that hour is totally ungodly, full of all evil, void of all good. 2. That he juſtifies *the ungodly that worketh not*, that till that moment worketh no good work: neither can he; for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. 3. That he juſtifies him *by faith alone*, without any goodneſs or righteouſneſs preceding: and, 4. That *faith is* then *counted to him for righteouſneſs*, namely, for *preceding righteouſneſs: i. e.* God through the merits of Chriſt, accepts him that believes as if he had already fulfilled all righteouſneſs. But what is all this to your point? The Apoſtle does not ſay, either here or elſewhere, that this faith is counted to him for *ſubſequent righteouſneſs*. He does teach, that there is no righteouſneſs *before* faith. But where does he teach, that there is none *after it?* He does aſſert, Holineſs cannot *precede* juſtification: But not, that it need not *follow* it. St. Paul therefore gives you no colour for *making void the law*, by teaching that faith ſuperſedes the neceſſity of holineſs.

III. 1. There is yet another way of *making void the law through faith*, which is more common than either of the former. And that is, the doing it practically: the making it void in *fact*, though not in *principle:* the *living*, as if faith was deſigned to excuſe us from holineſs.

How earneſtly does the Apoſtle guard us againſt this, in thoſe well known words: "What then?

Shall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace?" God *forbid!* Rom. vi. 15. A caution which it is needful thoroughly to conſider, becauſe it is of the laſt importance.

2. The being *under the law* may here mean. 1. The being obliged to obſerve the ceremonial law. 2. The being obliged to conform to the whole Moſaic inſtitution. 3. The being obliged to keep the whole moral law, as the condition of our acceptance with God: and, 4. The being under the wrath and curſe of God, under ſentence of eternal death; under a ſenſe of guilt and condemnation, full of horror and ſlaviſh fear.

3. Now although a believer is "not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt," yet from the moment he believes, he is not *under the law*, in any of the preceding ſenſes. On the contrary, he is *under grace*, under a more benign, gracious diſpenſation. As he is no longer under the ceremonial law, nor under the Moſaic inſtitution; as he is not obliged to keep even the moral law, as the condition of his acceptance: ſo he is delivered from the wrath and the curſe of God, from all ſenſe of guilt and condemnation, and from all that horror and fear and death and hell, whereby he was *all his life* before *ſubject to bondage*. And he now performs (which while *under the law* he could not do) a willing and univerſal obedience. He obeys not from the motive of ſlaviſh fear, but on a nobler principle, namely, The grace of God ruling in his heart, and cauſing all his works to be wrought in love.

4. What then? Shall this evangelical principle of action, be leſs powerful than the legal? Shall we be leſs obedient to God from filial love, than we were from ſervile fear?

It is well, if this is not a common caſe; if this practical

practical Antinomianism, this unobserved way of *making void the law through faith*, has not infected thousands of believers.

Has it not infected you? Examine yourself honestly and closely. Do you not do now, what you durst not have done when you was *under the law*, or (as we commonly call it) *under conviction?* For instance. You durst not then indulge yourself in food. You took just what was needful, and that of the cheapest kind. Do you not allow yourself more latitude now? Do you not indulge yourself a *little* more than you did? O beware, lest you *sin, because you are not under the law, but under grace!*

5. When you was under conviction, you durst not indulge the lust of the eye in any degree. You would not do any thing, great or small, merely to gratify your curiosity. You regarded only cleanliness and necessity, or at most very moderate convenience, either in furniture or apparel; superfluity and finery of whatever kind, as well as fashionable elegance, were both a terror and an abomination to you.

Are they so still? Is your conscience as tender now in these things, as it was then? Do you still follow the same rule both in furniture and apparel, trampling all finery, all superfluity, every thing useless, every thing merely ornamental, however fashionable, under foot? Rather, Have you not resumed what you had once laid aside, and what you could not then use without wounding your conscience? And have you not learned to say, "O, I am not so scrupulous now." I would to God you were! Then you would not *sin* thus, "because you are not under the law, but under grace."

6. You was once ſcrupulous too of commending any to their face, and ſtill more, of ſuffering any to commend you. It was a ſtab to your heart: you could not bear it: you ſought the honour that cometh of God only. You could not endure ſuch converſation: nor converſation which was not good, to the uſe of edifying. All idle talk, all trifling diſcourſe you abhorred, you hated as well as feared it, being deeply ſenſible of the value of time, of every precious fleeting moment. In like manner you dreaded and abhorred idle expence: valuing your money only leſs than your time, and trembling leſt you ſhould be found an unfaithful ſteward even of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs.

Do you now look upon praiſe as deadly poiſon, which you can neither give nor receive but at the peril of your ſoul? Do you ſtill dread and abhor all converſation, which does not tend to the uſe of edifying; and labour to improve every moment, that it may not paſs without leaving you better than it found you? Are not you leſs careful as to the expence both of money and time? Cannot you now lay out either, as you could not have done once? Alas! How has that "which ſhould have been for your health, proved to you an occaſion of falling? How have you "ſinned becauſe you was not under the law, but under grace!"

7. God forbid you ſhould any longer continue thus to *turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs!* O remember how clear and ſtrong a conviction you once had, concerning all theſe things. And at the ſame time you was fully ſatisfied, from whom that conviction came. The world told you, you was in a deluſion: but you knew, it was

was the voice of God. In these things you was not too scrupulous then; but you are not now scrupulous enough. God kept you longer in that painful school, that you might learn those great lessons the more perfectly. And have you forgot them already? O recollect them, before it is too late. Have you suffered so many things in vain? I trust, it is not yet in vain. Now use the conviction without the pain: practise the lesson without the rod. Let not the mercy of God weigh less with you now, than his fiery indignation did before. Is love a less powerful motive than fear? If not, let it be an invariable rule "I will do nothing now I am *under grace*, which I durst not have done when *under the law*."

8. I cannot conclude this head, without exhorting you to examine yourself likewise touching sins of omission. Are you as clear of these, now *you are under grace*, as you was when *under the law?* How diligent was you then in hearing the word of God? Did you neglect any opportunity? Did you not attend thereon day and night? Would a small hinderance have kept you away? A little business? A visitant? A slight indisposition? A soft bed? A dark or cold morning?—Did not you then fast often? Or use abstinence to the utmost of your power? Was not you much in prayer, (cold and heavy as you was) while you was hanging over the mouth of hell? Did you not speak and not spare even for an unknown God? Did you not boldly plead his cause? Reprove sinners? And avow the truth, before an adulterous generation?—And are you now a believer in Christ? Have you the *faith that overcometh the world?* What!

and are you leſs zealous for your Maſter now, than you was when you knew him not? Leſs diligent in faſting, in prayer, in hearing his word, in calling ſinners to God? O repent. See and feel your grievous loſs! Remember from whence you are fallen! Bewail your unfaithfulneſs! Now be zealous and do the firſt works; leſt if you continue to *make void the law through faith*, God cut you off, and *appoint* you your *portion with the unbelievers!*

SERMON

SERMON XXXV.

THE LAW ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH.

ROMANS III. 31.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we eſtabliſh the law.

1. IT has been ſhewn in the preceding Diſcourſe, which are the moſt uſual ways of *making void the law through faith:* namely, Firſt, The not preaching it at all, which effectually makes it all void at a ſtroke: and this under colour of *preaching Chriſt* and magnifying the goſpel, though it be in truth deſtroying both the one and the other: Secondly, The teaching (whether directly or indirectly) that faith ſuperſedes the neceſſity of holineſs: that this is leſs neceſſary now, or a leſs degree of it neceſſary, than before Chriſt came: that it is leſs neceſſary to us, becauſe we believe, than otherwiſe it

it would have been: or that Christian liberty is a liberty from any kind or degree of holiness: (so perverting those great truths, that we are now under the "covenant of grace, and not of works: that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law; and that to him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness:") Or, thirdly, The doing this practically; the making void the law in practice, though not in principle: the living or acting, as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness: the allowing ourselves in sin, "because we are not under the law, but under grace." It remains to enquire, how we may follow a better pattern, how we may be able to say with the Apostle, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

2. We do not indeed establish the old ceremonial law: we know that is abolished for ever. Much less do we establish the whole Mosaic dispensation. This, we know, our Lord has *nailed to his cross*. Nor yet do we so establish the moral law (which it is to be feared, too many do) as if the fulfilling it, the keeping all the commandments, were the condition of our justification. If it were so, surely "in his sight should no man living, be justified." But all this being allowed, we still in the Apostle's sense, *establish the law*, the moral law.

I. 1. We *establish the law*. First, By our doctrine: by endeavouring to preach it in its whole extent, to explain and enforce every part of it, in the same manner as our great Teacher did, while upon earth. We establish it, by following

St. Peter's

St. Peter's advice, "If any man ſpeak let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God;" as the holy men of old moved by the Holy Ghoſt, ſpoke and wrote for our inſtruction, and as the Apoſtles of our bleſſed Lord, by the direction of the ſame ſpirit. We eſtabliſh it whenever we ſpeak in his name, by keeping back nothing from them that hear; by declaring to them, without any limitation or reſerve, the whole counſel of God. And in order the more effectually to eſtabliſh it, we uſe herein great plainneſs of ſpeech. "We are not as many that corrupt the word of God," καπηλεύσι. (as artful men their bad wines) we do not cauponize, mix, adulterate or ſoften it, to make it ſuit the taſte of the hearers. "But as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God, ſpeak we in Chriſt;" as having no other aim, than "by manifeſtation of the truth, to commend ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God."

2. We then by our doctrine eſtabliſh the law, when we thus openly declare it to all men: and that, in the fulneſs wherein it is delivered by our bleſſed Lord and his Apoſtles: when we publiſh it in the height and depth and length and breadth thereof. We then eſtabliſh the law, when we declare every part of it, every commandment contained therein, not only in its full literal ſenſe, but likewiſe in its ſpiritual meaning: not only with regard to the outward actions, which it either forbids or enjoins: but alſo with reſpect to the inward principle, to the thoughts, deſires and intents of the heart.

3. And indeed this we do the more diligently, not only becauſe it is of the deepeſt importance; inaſmuch as all the fruit, every word and work, muſt

muſt be only evil continually, if the tree be evil, if the diſpoſitions and tempers of the heart, be not right before God: but likewiſe, becauſe as important as theſe things are, they are little conſidered or underſtood. So little, that we may truly ſay of the law too, when taken in its full ſpiritual meaning, It is "a myſtery which was hid from ages and generations ſince the world began." It was utterly hid from the heathen world. They, with all their boaſted wiſdom, neither *found out God*, nor the law of God, not in the letter, much leſs in the Spirit of it. *Their fooliſh hearts were* more and more *darkened*, while *profeſſing themſelves wiſe, they became fools.* And it was almoſt equally hid, as to its ſpiritual meaning, from the bulk of the Jewiſh nation. Even theſe who were ſo ready to declare concerning others, *this people that know not the law is accurſed*, pronounced their own ſentence therein, as being under the ſame curſe, the ſame dreadful ignorance. Witneſs our Lord's continual reproof of the wiſeſt among them, for their groſs miſinterpretations of it. Witneſs the ſuppoſition almoſt univerſally received among them, that they needed only to make clean the outſide of the cup: that the paying tythe of mint, aniſe and cummin, outward exactneſs would atone for inward holineſs; for the total neglect both of juſtice, and mercy; of faith and love of God. Yea, ſo abſolutely was the ſpiritual meaning of the law hidden from the wiſeſt of them, that one of their moſt eminent Rabbi's comments thus, on thoſe words of the Pſalmiſt, "If I incline unto iniquity with my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" that is, ſaith he, if it be only in my heart, if I do not commit outward

outward wickedneſs, the Lord will not regard it; he will not puniſh me, unleſs I proceed to the outward act!

4. But alas! The law of God, as to its inward ſpiritual meaning, is not hid from the Jews or heathens only, but even from what is called the Chriſtian world; at leaſt, from a vaſt majority of them. The ſpiritual ſenſe of the commandments of God, is ſtill a myſtery to theſe alſo. Nor is this obſervable only in thoſe lands, which are overſpread with Romiſh darkneſs and ignorance. But this is too ſure, that the far greater part, even of thoſe, who are called *reformed Chriſtians*, are utter ſtrangers at this day to the law of Chriſt, in the purity and ſpirituality of it.

5. Hence it is that to this day *the Scribes and Phariſees*, the men who have the form, but not the power of Religion, and who are generally wiſe in their own eyes, and righteous in their own conceits; *hearing theſe things are offended:* are deeply offended, when we ſpeak of the Religion of the heart, and particularly when we ſhew, that without this were we to *give all our goods to feed the poor*, it would profit us nothing. But offended they muſt be: for we cannot but ſpeak the truth as it is in Jeſus. It is our part, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, to deliver our own ſoul. All that is written in the book of God we are to declare, not as pleaſing men, but the Lord. We are to declare not only all the promiſes but all the threatenings too which we find therein. At the ſame time that we proclaim all the bleſſings and privileges, which God had prepared for his children, we are likewiſe to "teach all the things, whatſoever he hath commanded." And we know, that all theſe have

have their uſe; either for the awakening thoſe that ſleep, the inſtructing the ignorant, the comforting the feeble-minded, or the building up and perfecting of the ſaints. We know that *all Scripture, given by inſpiration of God, is profitable* either *for doctrine*, or *for reproof*, either *for correction* or *for inſtruction in righteouſneſs*: and *that the man of God*, in the proceſs of the work of God in his ſoul, has need of every part thereof, that he may at length be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.

6. It is our part, thus to *preach Chriſt*, by preaching all things whatſoever he hath revealed. We may indeed without blame, yea, and with a peculiar bleſſing from God, declare the love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. We may ſpeak, in a more eſpecial manner, *of the Lord our Righteouſneſs*. We may expatiate upon the grace of *God in Chriſt*, "reconciling the world unto himſelf." We may, at proper opportunities, dwell upon his praiſe, as "bearing the iniquities of us all, as wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities, that by his ſtripes we might be healed." But ſtill we ſhould not *preach Chriſt*, according to his word, if we were wholly to confine ourſelves to this. We are not ourſelves clear before God, unleſs we proclaim him in all his offices. *To preach Chriſt*, as a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, is to preach him not only as our great *High-Prieſt*, "taken from among men, and ordained for men, in things pertaining to God;" as ſuch, "reconciling us to God by his blood," and "ever living to make interceſſion for us:" but likewiſe as the Prophet of the Lord, "who of God is made unto us wiſdom." Who by his word, and his ſpirit, *is with us always*; "guiding

ing us into all truth:" yea, and as remaining a King for ever; as giving laws to all whom he has bought with his blood: as restoring those to the image of God, whom he had first reinstated in his favour: as reigning in all believing hearts until he has "subdued all things to himself;" until he hath utterly cast out all sin, and "brought in everlasting righteousness."

II. 1. *We establish the law,* Secondly, when we so preach faith in Christ, as not to supersede, but produce holiness: to produce all manner of holiness, negative and positive, of the heart and of the life.

In order to this, we continually declare (what should be frequently and deeply considered, by all who would not *make void the law through faith*) that faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone; love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world, to the consummation of all things. And it will endure when heaven and earth flee away; for *love* alone *never faileth.* Faith will totally fail: it will be swallowed up in sight, the everlasting vision of God. But even then love

"Its nature and its office still the same,
Lasting its lamp and unconsum'd its flame,
In deathless triumph shall for ever live,
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive."

2. Very excellent things are ſpoken of faith, and whoſoever is a partaker thereof, may well ſay with the Apoſtle, "Thanks be to God, for his unſpeakable gift." Yet ſtill it loſes all its excellence, when brought into a compariſon with love. What St. Paul obſerves concerning the ſuperior glory of the goſpel, above that of the law, may with great propriety be ſpoken of the ſuperior glory of love, above that of faith. "Even that which was made glorious, hath no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more doth that which remaineth exceed in glory." Yea, all the glory of faith before it is done away, ariſes hence, that it miniſters to love. It is the great temporary means which God has ordained to promote that eternal end.

3. Let thoſe who magnify faith beyond all proportion, ſo as to ſwallow up all things elſe, and who ſo totally miſapprehend the nature of it, as to imagine it ſtands in the place of love, conſider farther, That as love will exiſt after faith, ſo it did exiſt long before it. The angels, who from the moment of their creation, beheld the face of their Father that is in heaven, had no occaſion for faith, in its general notion, as it is the evidence of things not ſeen. Neither had they need of faith, in its more particular acceptation, faith in the blood of Jeſus: for he took not upon him the nature of angels; but only the ſeed of Abraham. There was therefore no place before the foundation of the world, for faith either in the general or particular ſenſe. But there was for love. Love exiſted from eternity, in God, the great ocean of love. Love

had

had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation. They received at once from their gracious Creator, to exiſt, and to love.

4. Nor is it certain (as ingeniouſly and plauſibly as many have deſcanted upon this,) That faith, even in the general ſenſe of the word, had any place in paradiſe. It is highly probable, from that ſhort and circumſtantial account which we have in Holy Writ, That Adam before he rebelled againſt God, walked with him by ſight and not by faith.

" For then his Reaſon's eye was ſtrong and clear,
And as an eagle can behold the ſun,
Might have beheld his Maker's face as near,
As th' intellectual angels could have done."

He was then able to talk with him face to face, whoſe face we cannot now ſee and live. And conſequently had no need of that faith, whoſe office it is, to ſupply the want of ſight.

5. On the other hand, it is abſolutely certain, faith in its particular ſenſe had then no place. For in that ſenſe it neceſſarily preſuppoſes ſin, and the wrath of God declared againſt the ſinner; without which there is no need of an atonement for ſin, in order to the ſinner's reconciliation with God. Conſequently, as there was no need of an atonement before the fall, ſo there was no place for faith in that atonement. Man being then pure from every ſtain of ſin, holy as God is holy. But love even then filled his heart. It reigned in him without a rival. And it was only when love was loſt by ſin, that faith was added, not for its own ſake, nor with any deſign, that it ſhould exiſt any longer, than until

it had anſwered the end for which it was ordained, namely, To reſtore man to the love from which he was fallen. At the fall therefore was added this evidence of things unſeen, which before was utterly needleſs: this confidence in redeeming love, which could not poſſibly have any place, till the promiſe was made, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head.

6. Faith then was originally deſigned of God, to re-eſtabliſh the law of love. Therefore in ſpeaking thus, we are not undervaluing it, or robbing it of its due praiſe: but on the contrary ſhewing its real worth, exalting it in its juſt proportion, and giving it that very place which the wiſdom of God aſſigned it from the beginning. It is the grand means of reſtoring that holy love, wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itſelf, (as neither is any other means whatſoever) yet as it leads to that end, the eſtabliſhing anew the law of love in our hearts, and as, in the preſent ſtate of things, it is the only means under heaven for effecting it: it is on that account an unſpeakable bleſſing to man, and of unſpeakable value before God.

III. 1. And this naturally brings us to obſerve, Thirdly, The moſt important way of *eſtabliſhing the law:* namely, The eſtabliſhing it in our own hearts and lives. Indeed without this, what would all the reſt avail? We might eſtabliſh it by our doctrine; we might preach it in its whole extent, might explain and inforce every part of it. We might open it in its moſt ſpiritual meaning, and declare the myſteries of the kingdom: we might preach Chriſt in all his offices, and faith in Chriſt, as opening all the treaſures of

his

his love. And yet all this time, if the law we preached, were not eſtabliſhed in our hearts, we ſhould be of no more account before God, than "ſounding braſs, or tinkling cymbals." All our preaching would be ſo far from profiting ourſelves, that it would only increaſe our damnation.

2. This is therefore the main point to be conſidered, How may we eſtabliſh the law in our own hearts, ſo that it may have its full influence on our lives? And this can only be done by faith.

Faith alone it is, which effectually anſwers this end, as we learn from daily experience. For ſo long as we walk by faith, not by ſight, we go ſwiftly on in the way of holineſs. While we ſteadily look, not at the things which are ſeen, but at thoſe which are not ſeen, we are more and more crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us. Let but the eye of the ſoul be conſtantly fixed, not on the things which are temporal, but on thoſe which are eternal, and our affections are more and more looſened from earth, and fixed on things above. So that faith in general is the moſt direct and effectual means of promoting all righteouſneſs and true holineſs: of eſtabliſhing the holy and ſpiritual law, in the hearts of them that believe.

3. And by faith, taken in its more particular meaning, for a confidence in a pardoning God, we eſtabliſh his law in our own hearts, in a ſtill more effectual manner. For there is no motive which ſo powerfully inclines us to love God, as the ſenſe of the love of God in Chriſt. Nothing enables us like a piercing conviction of this, to give our hearts to him who was given for us. And

And from this principle of grateful love to God, arises love to our brother also. Neither can we avoid loving our neighbour, if we truly believe the love wherewith God hath loved us. Now this love to man grounded on faith and love to God, *worketh no ill to* our *neighbour*. Consequently, it is (as the Apostle observes,) the *fulfilling of the* whole negative *law*. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Neither is love content with barely working no evil to our neighbour. It continually incites us to do good: as we have time, and opportunity, to do good in every possible kind, and in every possible degree to all men. It is therefore the fulfilling of the positive likewise, as well as of the negative law of God.

4. Nor does faith fulfil either the negative or positive law, as to the external part only: but it works inwardly by love, to the purifying of the heart, the cleansing it from all vile affections. "Every one that hath this faith in himself, purifieth himself even as he is pure: purifieth himself from every earthly, sensual desire, from all vile and inordinate affections: yea, from the whole of that carnal mind, which is enmity against God. At the same time, if it have its perfect work, it fills him with all goodness, righteousness and truth. It brings all heaven into his soul, and causes him to walk in the light even as God is in the light.

5. Let us thus endeavour to establish the law in ourselves: not sinning, *because we are under grace*, but

but rather using all the power we receive thereby, *to fulfil all righteousness*. Calling to mind, what light we received from God, while his spirit was convincing us of sin, let us beware we do not put out that light: what we had then attained let us hold fast. Let nothing induce us to build again what we have destroyed; to resume any thing, small or great, which we then clearly saw was not for the glory of God, or the profit of our own soul: or to neglect any thing, small or great, which we could not then neglect, without a check from our own conscience. To increase and perfect the light which we had before, let us now add the light of faith. Confirm we the former gift of God, by a deeper sense of whatever he had then shewn us: by a greater tenderness of conscience, and a more exquisite sensibility of sin. Walking now with joy and not with fear, in a clear, steady sight of things eternal, we shall look on pleasure, wealth, praise, all the things of earth, as on bubbles upon the water: counting nothing important, nothing desirable, nothing worth a deliberate thought, but only what is "within the veil, where Jesus sitteth at the right-hand of God."

6. Can *you* say, "Thou art merciful to my unrighteousness: my sins thou remembereſt no more?" Then for the time to come, see that you fly from sin, as from the face of a serpent. For how exceeding sinful does it appear to you now? How heinous above all expression? On the other hand, in how amiable a light do you now see the holy and perfect will of God? Now therefore labour that it may be fulfilled, both in you, by you, and upon you. Now watch and pray that you may sin no more, that you may see and

and ſhun the leaſt tranſgreſſion of his law. You ſee the motes which you could not ſee before, as when the ſun ſhines into a dark place. In like manner, you ſee the ſins which you could not ſee before, now the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhines in your heart. Now then do all diligence to walk in every reſpect, according to the light you have received. Now be zealous to receive more light daily, more of the knowledge and love of God, more of the Spirit of Chriſt, more of his life, and of the power of his reſurrection. Now uſe all the knowledge, and love, and life, and power you have already attained. So ſhall you continually go on from faith to faith. So ſhall you daily increaſe in holy love, till faith is ſwallowed up in ſight, and the law of love is eſtabliſhed to all eternity.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

L. C. CARDS ORDERED